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A BREAK-OUT ROLE AMID AN ALL-STAR CAST

JULIANNE NICHOLSON STARS IN AUGUST: OSAGE COUNTY ALONGSIDE STREEP, ROBERTS, CUMBERBATCH, MCGREGOR... PAGE 20

Polar vortex takes U.S. by surprise

Sub-Antarctic temperatures and power outages grip parts of country ill-prepared for such harsh cold PAGE 12

I keep clicking on headlines, but nothing ...

That's because this is a newspaper, which you may have forgotten with all your digital screen time PAGE 8

Sand isn't just for your icy walkway

There are warm, sunny beaches out there! Metro breaks down eight of the best in the West PAGE 23

NEWS WORTH SHARING.

Flight freeze was critical, cries official

Ground stop, ruckus start. Passengers in uproar after hundreds of flights cancelled

The Greater Toronto Airport Authority is under fire for its decision to halt all arriving flights for more than eight hours at Pearson Airport, stranding thousands of frustrated passengers and causing delays that could last days.

Frigid temperatures of -25 C and -40 C wind chills caused the authority to declare a "ground stop" at about 2 a.m. Tuesday, meaning that no flights could land, before finally lifting it at 10 a.m.

But the damage was done: more than half of all 774 arriving flights were cancelled, along with 381 — or nearly half — of all departures as of Tuesday evening.

Meanwhile, GTAA chief executive officer Howard Eng was out of the country on business and was not expected to return until Friday. Staff told Torstar News Service his "schedule didn't allow" for an interview.

Toby Lennox, vice-president of strategy development for the GTAA, said the decision marked the first time in his 15-year career that a ground stop was declared due to extreme cold.

Typically, stops are called due to snowstorms or lightning and last only a few hours.

"It's just never been this extreme," he said. "No matter how much you prepare, you're not going to be able to make the event go away. I can't prepare to make the weather go away."

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

MORE COVERAGE, PAGE 3

RED, WHITE AND ... GOLD?

Executive director Steve Yzerman and his staff announced the final 25-man roster making up Canada's hockey team for the Sochi Olympics on Tuesday in Toronto. There were some surprises — a few players who were considered locks at some point in the process did not make the cut. See story, page 30. PHOTOS: THE CANADIAN PRESS/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS/GETTY IMAGES; PHOTO ILLUSTRATION: DAVID VAN DYKE/METRO

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Pearson passengers peeved about lengthy delays

Stranded. Airport authority will conduct review of response to the cold weather

Ripple effect

The delays at Pearson are expected to have a ripple effect at other airports across Canada as planes fail to arrive on time. Travellers are being urged to check their flight status online before heading to the airport.

Many passengers stranded at Pearson airport on Tuesday — after all arriving flights were halted for more than eight hours — questioned why the airport was not better prepared for the cold snap, as Environment Canada warned Sunday that temperatures would dip to –25 C Tuesday with a bitter –40 wind chill.

Asked why the authority did not halt flights leaving from other airports so that passengers wouldn't be stranded at Pearson waiting for connections, Toby Lennox, vice-president of strategy development for the Greater Toronto Airport Authority, said a ground stop is only declared after all other options have been exhausted. He promised the GTAA would conduct a full review of its response to the extreme cold, as it does with all weather events. Asked if any mistakes were made, he said he didn't think so. "Will we learn from this? Absolutely," he said. "We are going to debrief."

Inside the Air Canada departures terminal Tuesday, weary travellers trudged forward in hours-long lines to rebook their cancelled or missed flights. Many complained there was no clear communication from airport staff.

Bear, a Jack Russell Terrier, waits in a luggage rack with his owner Ryan Racik, who was trying to get back to Edmonton. Racik said his WestJet flight last night was cancelled due to the weather. BERNARD WEIL/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

"There's lots of people pointing you to which line to go, but not a lot of people behind the counter," said an exhausted Ryan Carroll, who was travelling from Buenos Aires with his family. "It just seems like they have no plan."

Meanwhile, Scott Paton rested on the floor, while another kind passenger held his place in line. Paton waited for four hours Monday night on the tarmac on his flight from Miami and missed his connecting flight to Vancouver. As of 12 p.m. Tuesday, he still hadn't slept and didn't know when he would be able to return home.

"I don't know why they were allowing planes to arrive last night," he said. "It makes it hard on the employees. It makes it hard on us."

As of about 4 p.m. Tuesday, the long lineups had shortened. The arrivals and departures screens still showed nearly every flight was delayed, however. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

TTC workers praised for 'heroic' efforts

Commuters at King and Bay on Tuesday. BERNARD WEIL/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

TTC officials defended Toronto's commitment to its streetcar fleet on Tuesday, as commuters shivered at their stops while 61 vehicles — about a third of the normal rush-hour fleet — remained out of service during the frigid morning commute.

Thirty-five were expected to be out of commission for the afternoon rush as well, and buses were being used to supplement the service. It is cold comfort for riders, but this week's Arctic blast and the pre-Christmas ice storm could have been far worse, given the TTC's aged infrastructure, according to transit officials.

Deputy Mayor Norm Kelly went to the TTC's transit control centre Tuesday to praise the "heroic" efforts of transit workers during the ice storm.

"Now it's time to pay attention to the unsung heroes," he said, calling the support of workers inside the control centre "remarkable."

Some TTC workers literally stood on trucks and used sticks to knock ice off the overhead streetcar wires, said TTC chief customer officer Chris Upfold, who was in charge during the storm. This week as the temperatures plunged, 10 TTC "storm cars" also crawled through all 11 downtown streetcar routes overnight to try to prevent switches from freezing and further impeding service.

The streetcars have sanding mechanisms that are working well to improve the traction between the metal wheels and tracks. But there's little that the TTC can do to prevent the pneumatic air lines that operate the brakes and doors of its 30-plus-year-old fleet from freezing.

All the more reason, said TTC chair Karen Stintz, to welcome the new $1.2-billion Bombardier streetcars that will be rolled out over the next six years. The new low-floor vehicles use electrical and hydraulic systems that will be more reliable in the cold. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Court. New licensing rules for Chinese medicine are discriminatory: Lawyers

Ontario's new licensing regulations, with their English and French language requirement, discriminate against experienced Chinese medicine practitioners, their lawyers told a Toronto court Tuesday.

In a case that pits the Charter of Rights against provincial health professional regulations, two Chinese medicine practitioners, three patients and a community coalition have taken the province and the College of Traditional Chinese Medicine Practitioners and Acupuncturists of Ontario to court.

"This is the only health profession in the province that is ethnically, culturally and linguistically based," their lawyer Rocco Galati told a packed Ontario Divisional Court. "There is no reason why they can't write these (qualifying) exams in Chinese."

Galati said the regulator requires fluency in English or French, which discourages many highly qualified practitioners. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Travel

Canadians longing for sunny escapes

The polar vortex seems to have many Canadians aching to take a trip south.

Travel inquiries at the Flight Centre have doubled in the past week, said spokesperson Allison Wallace. "Would-be travellers are asking, 'Where can I go that's sunny and warm and reasonably priced?'" Wallace said. "I think people already feel like it's been a long winter and they want to go somewhere warm."

Sun-drenched locales such Dominican Republic, Mexico, Jamaica and Cuba are getting the most inquiries, Wallace said. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Woman who lost lotto ticket claims $50M prize

Prize pickup. International travel and setting up a local charity are among Kathryn Jones' plans

A Hamilton woman who bought a lottery ticket more than a year ago and then lost it received a cheque for $50 million on Tuesday, becoming the winner of what officials called the biggest unclaimed jackpot in Canadian history.

Kathryn Jones' case was "unique" because it was the first time the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation identified and located a winner through its claims investigation process, OLG CEO Rod Phillips told reporters.

For the soft-spoken Jones, the entire experience had been an "interesting" one.

"It has been very weird, but on the other hand it is wonderful because the results are going to be life changing," said the 55-year-old mother of two.

Kathryn Jones, who didn't know she'd won a $50-million jackpot until the OLG tracked her down, says the whole experience has been "weird" yet "wonderful." TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Jones bought a ticket at a Shoppers Drug Mart in Cambridge in 2012 during a stressful time at work, a purchase she said wasn't part of a regular routine.

"I buy them sporadically, once in a blue moon," she said. "I was having a rough day."

The $16 ticket turned out to have the winning jackpot numbers from the Nov. 30, 2012, Lotto Max draw, but OLG said Jones didn't come forward to claim her prize.

Instead, the gaming agency received more than 435 claims for that draw and in the process of reviewing them it found that Jones had the winning ticket.

When Jones wasn't able to find her ticket, OLG carried out its Lost Ticket Prize Claim process to ensure she was the rightful winner.

That investigation included interviews with Jones, using the OLG transactions database to verify her purchase, checking surveillance video that showed her buying the ticket and referencing her credit card statements. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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#fineline. When do tweets become harassment?

Where is the line between criminal harassment and trolling? An unusual and potentially precedent-setting court case that began Tuesday may shed some light on the issue.

Gregory Alan Elliot was charged with three counts of criminal harassment and one count of breaching a peace bond after repeatedly sending Twitter messages to three women that allegedly made them fear for their safety.

The first woman to go to the police was Stephanie Guthrie, a local activist who tweets prolifically about feminism and Toronto politics. Guthrie met Elliot via Twitter when looking for someone to design posters for a group she founded, "Women in TO politics." They met in person, and Guthrie later told the investigating officer Det. Jeff Bangild that she felt "seedy" just sitting across from him, court heard Tuesday.

She then discovered Elliot had a history of sending tweets she considered sexually harassing and offensive to women, and decided not to hire him. In the months that followed Guthrie said she received harassing tweets from Elliot, and finally went to police in November 2012.

After Elliot was charged with criminal harassment on Nov. 21, two of Guthrie's fellow political-feminist Twitter users Heather Reilly and Paisley Rae came forward and two more charges were laid.

However, Elliot's defence lawyer Chris Murphy contends the complainants also engaged in hurtful behaviour by using the hashtag "#GAEhole" to refer to Elliot.

Bangild told the court he did not find any tweets from Elliot that threatened to harm any of the three women.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Past experience

Stephanie Guthrie is no stranger to the dark side of Twitter. After tweeting support for an American feminist and gamer in 2012, Guthrie became the target of death and rape threats.

Home could-be-sweeter home

Photographer Carmen Lee stands beside one of her works called Take Me Home, being displayed at the Eco Art Exhibit at Gallery 1313 on Queen Street, from Jan. 8 to Jan. 19. The exhibit, which includes photography, painting, sculpture and mixed media, explores environmental concerns such as air quality, urban sprawl, water quality and nature preservation. CONTRIBUTED

Challenge dismissed

Cuts to Arab group's funding found reasonable

A federal court judge has ruled that former Immigration Minister Jason Kenney acted reasonably when he cut federal funding to the Canadian Arab Federation because it appeared to support the actions of terrorist organizations.

Justice Russel Zinn dismissed CAF's challenge of the decision to cut funding to the group for a language instruction program.

The decision is a "vindication of common sense," says Kenney, who is now Minister of Employment and Social Development as well as Minister of Multiculturalism.

"Groups who express apparently hateful views or who defend terrorist organizations should not receive taxpayer funding, period," Kenney said via email.

"This is especially true for organizations charged with the integration of newcomers."

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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Did you look up from a screen to read this?

Odds are you did, says a recent report. Half of Canadians say they spend close to 90% of their free time staring at a TV, tablet or smartphone

Canadian smartphone owners spend an average of about 86 per cent of their free time looking at one of their many screens, a recently released poll suggests. ISTOCK

Canadian smartphone owners estimate they spend an average of nearly 90 per cent of their free time staring at one of the many screens they own, suggests a recently released report.

In an online poll of 28,000 Canadians — conducted in August by Ipsos on behalf of Google — half the respondents said they owned a smartphone. Of the smartphone users, 99 per cent also had a computer, 88 per cent had a TV, and 39 per cent had a tablet.

Smartphone owners admitted that they'd peg their screen time, including watching TV, using a computer, tablet or e-reader at about 86 per cent of their free time.

On the flip side, they figured they spent only 14 per cent of their leisure time daily listening to the radio, reading a printed page or enjoying other non-digital activities.

On average, smartphone owners said they spent about an hour and a half each day on their phone for personal use, with about 56 per cent happening outside the home.

Tablet owners said they were using their device for about an hour and 15 minutes daily, and three-quarters of that usage was at home.

Computer users said they spent three hours and 10 minutes working or playing on a PC daily in their personal time, including an hour away from home.

When asked about using their devices simultaneously — for example, swiping and tapping on a phone or tablet while watching TV — 87 per cent said they do it at least once a week.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Vancouver. Protesters who disrupted Harper event won't be charged

Vancouver police say they won't be pursuing criminal charges against two climate-change protesters who came within touching distance of Prime Minister Stephen Harper on a stage at an event in Vancouver.

The protesters, who have publicly identified themselves as Sean Devlin and Shireen Soofi, walked on stage during a Vancouver Board of Trade question-and-answer event at a downtown hotel on Monday.

They were quickly removed and the event carried on, but the stunt raised questions about how two activists could get that close to Harper.

Sgt. Randy Fincham said Vancouver police consulted with the RCMP and decided not to recommend charges.

"After consultation with both (the RCMP and the Crown), it was determined that it wasn't in the public's best interest to pursue an investigation into criminal charges," Fincham said in an interview Tuesday.

On Monday, the activists each held up a sign attacking Harper's record on climate change. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Prime Minister Stephen Harper's security keeps watch during his arrival at the Shell Aerocentre in North Saanich, B.C., Monday. CHAD HIPOLITO/THE CANADIAN PRESS

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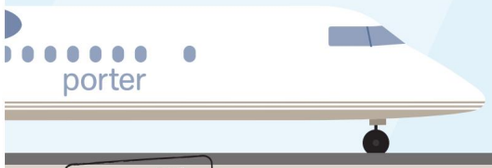

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Time served for U.S. woman who assisted in mom's suicide

Shirley Vann, left, her daughter Linda Jean McNall and their two dogs are shown in this family photo. A U.S. mental health advocate hopes an Arizona woman who admits she helped her mother commit suicide in Canada will continue to get care if she's deported. THE CANADIAN PRESS/HANDOUT

Alberta. Judge who sentenced Linda Jean McNall says he hopes she receives 'ongoing treatment and comfort'

An Alberta judge has agreed that an American woman who pleaded guilty to helping her mother kill herself should not have to spend any more time behind bars.

Judge Charles Gardener sentenced Linda Jean McNall to eight months of time already served on the rare charge of aiding suicide in the death of her 79-year-old mother, Shirley Vann.

Court heard details about a suicide pact McNall made with Vann. Both had health problems and had cared for one another for decades.

Last spring, after Vann's health deteriorated, they sold their belongings, left behind mounting medical bills and drove from Sierra Vista, Ariz., to Canada's Rocky Mountains.

They pitched a tent near Hinton, 300 kilometres west of Edmonton, injected themselves and their two pet dogs with insulin, swallowed sleeping pills and opened a propane tank. Vann and the animals died, but McNall, 53, survived.

McNall, who had worked as a nurse, pleaded guilty to the crime last month. The sentence means McNall, who still suffers from depression and was being treated at Alberta Hospital, will be deported to Arizona.

McNall's lawyer, Laura Stevens, said her client will spend the night in jail in Edmonton and will be flown back to Phoenix on Wednesday. There, Stevens said, her client is scheduled to be evaluated by a case worker and a crisis management team.

"I take some comfort that your condition is improving," Gardener told McNall. "I hope you will receive some ongoing treatment and comfort … and that you eventually find worth and value in your life."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Alberta. Man likely to face attempted murder charge after shootout with RCMP

RCMP say a man who was wounded in a shootout with Mounties on a farm east of Edmonton will likely face attempted murder and firearms charges.

One officer had his arm grazed by a bullet and another was run over by a truck driven by the suspect, who had been hiding in a shed.

The officer who was run over suffered broken bones and internal injuries and was undergoing surgery at an Edmonton hospital Tuesday afternoon.

Police said a couple arrested on the farm with the alleged gunman were later released without being charged.

The alleged gunman was in hospital being treated for gunshot wounds.

The wounded suspect was arrested after a lengthy standoff.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Mexico City

2 Canadian women arrested in alleged firebomb attack

Two Canadian women have been arrested in Mexico City in connection with a firebomb attack on a government transportation department office and a car dealership. A Mexican man was also detained.

Prosecutors say the three face possible charges of causing damages to the office and the nearby car dealership.

The motive in the attack was not immediately clear.

Some Mexico City banks have been hit in recent years by small incendiary devices.

Those attacks have been attributed to small groups of leftists or animal rights activists. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Peterborough Lansdowne Place – Centre Court near SPORTCHEK - Sunday, January 12, 12pm – 1:30pm

St. Catharines The Pen Centre – Sears Court - Thursday, January 16, 6:30pm – 8pm

Budweiser Gardens prior to London Knights Game (must have ticket to game) - Friday, January 17, 5pm – 6:30pm

Mississauga Erin Mills Town Centre – Lower Level - Saturday, January 18, 2pm – 3:30pm

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Life-threatening polar freeze descends over parts of U.S.

Indiana. At least 15,000 people were without power early Tuesday

Brutal cold settled over parts of the U.S., sending the mercury plummeting Tuesday from New York and Washington to Atlanta, Nashville and Birmingham, where many people have little experience dealing with freezing weather.

The morning weather map for the eastern half of the U.S. looked like an algebra worksheet: lots of small, negative numbers. In fact, the Midwest and the East were colder than much of Antarctica.

Georgia, where the temperature dropped into the single digits, was colder than many cities in Alaska. While Kodiak and Juneau registered 4 and Anchorage was at -2, Atlanta dipped to -14 degrees early in the morning, or nearly 17 degrees below the average low this time of year.

"This is severely cold for these parts," said Brian Lynn, a National Weather Service meteorologist in Peachtree City, Ga.

Farther south in Pensacola, Fla., a Gulf Coast city better known for its white sand beaches than frost, streets normally filled with joggers, bikers and people walking dogs were deserted early Tuesday as the morning remained in the negative teens. Downtown, Monica Anderson jumped up and down and blew on her hands while waiting for a bus, struggling to stay warm. "I'm not used to it. It is best just to stay inside until it gets better," said Anderson. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The cold weather makes vision challenging as Jobin Curoe's glasses fog up while walking in temperatures and wind chills reaching –40 C to –50 C on the Lawrence University campus in Appleton, Wis. on Monday.

SHARON CEKADA/THE POST-CRESCENT/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Prison brrr-eak

Fugitive too cold to get far, gives up

Just how cold is it in the U.S.? Apparently cold enough for an escaped prisoner to turn himself in. Authorities say the inmate escaped from a minimum security facility in Kentucky on Sunday. As temperatures dropped far below freezing Monday, they say he walked into a motel and asked the clerk to call police. A Lexington police spokeswoman says 42-year-old Robert Vick told the clerk he wanted to turn himself in and escape the arctic air.

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Oil's well that ends well. Washing machine gives birth to fully grown man

A naked Australian man who became stuck in a washing machine as part of an ill-planned practical joke was freed from the appliance with the help of an unusual rescue device: olive oil.

The 20-year-old man, identified only as "Laurence," told Australia's Fairfax Radio that he was on his way to take a shower on Saturday when he decided to climb into the top-loader to have a bit of fun.

Priorities

"I was quite disappointed they used my good olive oil."

Would-be prankster 'Laurence'

The fun quickly evaporated, however, when he realized he couldn't budge.

He called out to his friend for help, who rang the police. They responded to the scene, along with firefighters, paramedics and a search-and-rescue squad.

"He was very well wedged in there, and we were concerned for his health and well-being," Shepparton Police Sgt. Michelle De Araugo told the Shepparton News. "It was just a game gone wrong. It would be fair to say the gentleman was very embarrassed."

Rescuers tried in vain to pull Laurence from the machine.

But when it became clear he was seriously stuck, they grabbed a bottle of his favourite olive oil to help lubricate his escape.

The oil worked, and he popped out.

"I was quite disappointed they used my good olive oil," Laurence told Fairfax Radio. "As soon as the washing machine went on its side, it was a bit like a birthing."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Can't-sea otter finds safe home

Walter, a sea otter blinded by a shotgun in October, was moved from the Marine Mammal Rescue Centre to the Vancouver Aquarium on Tuesday after he was deemed not-releasable into the wild. The otter suffered multiple shattered bones in his flipper and needed oral surgery to treat damage caused by the shotgun pellets. Veterinarians were unable to save Walter's eyesight. SINDHU DHARMARAJAH/METRO IN VANCOUVER

What did you eat?

Diapers set off Geiger counters

Austrian hazmat specialists have discovered why gauges showed alarming readings for a dump truck: radioactive adult diapers.

Firefighters from the hazardous-materials unit of the city of Linz found nearly two dozen diapers from a hospital that had become contaminated with radioactive iodine. The substance is swallowed during some medical and diagnostic procedures.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Whey your options

Velveeta may be scarce for weeks

Kraft Foods says some customers may not be able to find Velveeta cheese over the next few weeks. A representative for the company didn't give any reasons for the apparent shortage, saying only that they happen from time to time given the "nature of manufacturing."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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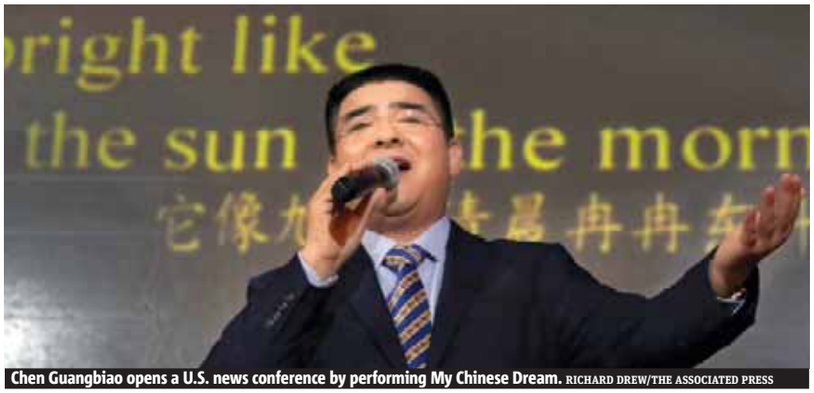

Chen Guangbiao opens a U.S. news conference by performing My Chinese Dream. RICHARD DREW/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

‘No. 1 philanthropist’ has a Chinese dream

Tycoon. News conference about treating burn victims called propaganda by protesters

A business tycoon who bills himself as China’s No. 1 philanthropist told reporters in New York on Tuesday that he has brought two women to the U.S. to undergo surgery for burns they suffered when they set themselves on fire in Beijing’s Tiananmen Square in 2001 amid the Chinese government’s brutal crackdown on Falun Gong practitioners.

Chen Guangbiao introduced the two to U.S. and Chinese reporters at an unorthodox news conference. Chen began the conference by singing a song he wrote himself, which included the soaring lyric, “The whole world will witness my Chinese dream!”

Then he talked of having a plan to buy The New York Times. He has said the paper should be more “objective” in its coverage of China.

Practitioners of the Falun Gong spiritual movement picketed the event, saying the two burn victims were propaganda tools of the Chinese government. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Swedish minister under fire for response to fake pot story

Sweden’s justice minister is facing ridicule for posting a spoof article about marijuana-linked deaths on her Facebook page along with comments about her zero-tolerance against drugs.

Beatrice Ask of Sweden’s ruling Conservative Party linked to the Daily Currant’s satire article, which claimed (falsely) that marijuana overdoses killed 37 people in Colorado on the first day of legalization.

Above the link she wrote: “Stupid and sad. My first bill in the youth wing was called Outfight the Drugs! In this matter I haven’t changed opinion at all.”

The comment quickly spread in social media, triggering widespread criticism.

Ask’s press officer Per Clareus said Tuesday the minister was aware the marijuana article was fake. The press officer added that she was trying to criticize the website for joking about such a serious matter and said she was misunderstood. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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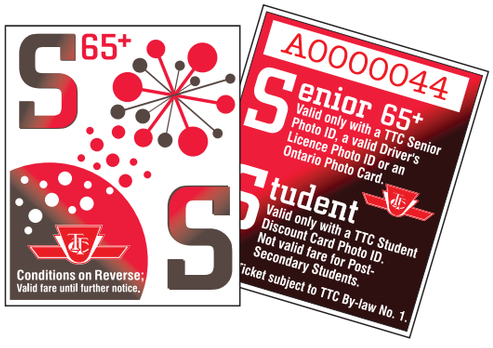
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Drug lords going bananas?

Cocaine haul sent to supermarkets

Police in Germany seized a large haul of cocaine after smugglers apparently made a mistake that sent the drug to supermarkets.

Workers at five stores in and around Berlin were surprised to find cocaine packed into crates of bananas on Monday — a total of 140 kilograms.

The head of Berlin's anti-drugs squad said Tuesday the crates had come from Colombia via the German port of Hamburg and the discovery was "pure chance." German news agency dpa quoted Olaf Schremm as saying that the smugglers had probably made "a logistical mistake."

It's estimated the drugs would have had a street value of $8.2 million US.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Syria's chemical weapons

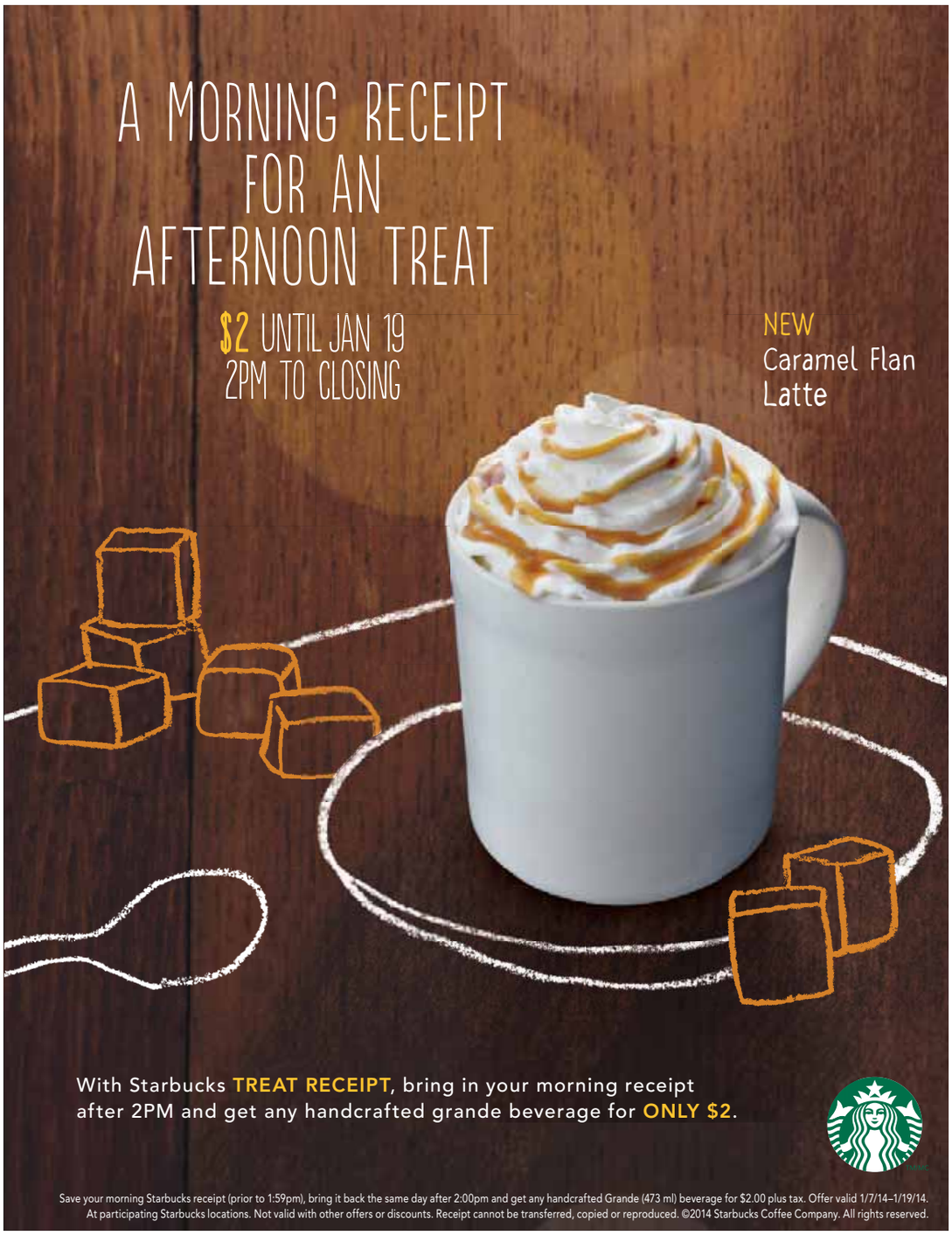
First poison-gas batch shipped out

The first batch of Syrian poison gas chemicals was loaded onto a Danish cargo ship and taken out of the country Tuesday — a week later than initially planned, the United Nations announced.

The announcement that the raw materials had been loaded onto the ship at Syria's Latakia port marked a belated but crucial step in the international operation to rid President Bashar Assad of his declared chemical weapons program by mid-year.

The chemicals removed Tuesday will eventually be transferred to a U.S. ship, the Cape Ray, which has been fitted with special machinery, and destroyed on board.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS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Afghan border police hold Spozhmai, a 10-year-old Afghan girl, in the Khan Neshin district in Afghanistan's Helmand province on Monday. She told police her brother wrapped her in a suicide vest but that she refused to blow herself up at a checkpoint. ABDUL KHALEQ/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Taliban deny sending girl, 10, to blow up checkpoint

Human rights groups scoff. Insurgents have dispatched children for suicide bombings, but girls have been used only rarely, they say

The Taliban denied Tuesday that they dispatched a 10-year-old girl to carry out a suicide attack against Afghan police, a day after the girl said her brother wrapped her in an explosives-packed vest but that she refused to blow herself up at a checkpoint in Helmand province.

Border police in the southern Afghan province arrested the girl's father, Abdul Ghfar, and were searching for the brother, a police commander said. The girl, who was detained Monday and identified herself only as Spozhmai, said her brother is a Taliban commander.

Addressing television cameras on Monday, she said her brother, Zahir, told her to approach a checkpoint and ask the deputy commander for a ride with him to neighbouring Kunar province.

"I agreed, then he attached the vest on my body and told me to spend the night here and leave in the morning," she said.

But after she and her brother spent the night somewhere, she said she had second thoughts.

"I said I won't go, then he took off the vest and tried to convince me that they (police) will die and I will remain alive," Spozhmai said. She said her brother then fled with the vest.

"There have been very few documented cases of girls being involved in suicide bomb attacks," Heather Barr, Afghanistan senior researcher at Human Rights Watch, said.

According to Human Rights Watch, an eight-year-old girl was killed in central Uruzgan province in 2011 when a bag of explosives the Taliban instructed her to carry to a police checkpoint detonated.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Taliban denial

"We never do this, especially with girls."

Taliban spokesman Qari Yousef Ahamdi, denying any involvement in the plot, which he dismissed as government propaganda.

Sears pecks Canada Goose back over lawsuit

Statement of defence. Feathers are flying as retailers hiss at each other over allegations of selling knockoff parkas

Canada Goose is trying to "bully" Sears Canada Inc. and other retailers through litigation, Sears is alleging in court documents as it hits back at a trademark infringement lawsuit.

The parka maker's real motive is to curtail the sales of lower-priced winter jackets so Canada Goose can keep selling its products "at a huge mark up," Sears alleges.

Canada Goose alleges in a lawsuit filed late last year that Sears is selling knockoffs of its highly distinctive coats.

The department store has now filed its statement of defence in Federal Court and is taking direct aim not just at this particular lawsuit, but what the retailer calls Canada Goose's "campaign of intimidation."

Canada Goose is trying to claim the exclusive right to sell any winter coat with a fur collar "of any sort" or with a circular logo on its sleeve, Sears alleges in its statement of defence.

Neither Sears' nor Canada Goose's allegations have been proven in court.

Canada Goose alleges that Sears is intentionally trying to mislead consumers into believing they're buying a "lower-end" Canada Goose jacket, the parka maker alleges in its lawsuit.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Canada Goose parkas are known for a distinctive circular logo on its sleeve, fur hood and hefty price tag. THE CANADIAN PRESS FILE

Apptacular sales

Apple's app store tops $10B in 2013

The Angry Birds Star Wars app
SCREENGRAB

Apple says people spent more than $10 billion US in its app store last year, on apps such as Minecraft, Angry Birds Star Wars and Sleep Cycle alarm clock.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Market Minute

DOLLAR
92.83¢ (-1.05¢)

TSX
13,596.93 (+101.39)

OIL
$93.67 US (+$0.24)

GOLD
$1,229.60 US (-$8.40)

Natural gas: $4.33 US (+$0.03)
Dow Jones: 16,530.94 (+105.84)

Crystal clear sound

A photographer snaps a picture of a glass speaker during the International Consumer Electronics Show, Sunday in Las Vegas. The speaker, by ClearView Audio, uses a single piece of curved millimetre-thick acrylic glass that sits on a dock which vibrates it in a finely tuned way so that it can play music.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE

JUST SAYIN'

Paul Sullivan
metronews.ca

You have to feel sorry for Michael Bay.

Not because he's the director of epic Hollywood stinkers such as the Transformers movies and classic clunkers such as Pearl Harbour and Bad Boys II.

No, we have to send Michael a hug because he has suffered through the worst experience ever. There he was at the giant Consumer Electronics Show in Vegas on Monday, presenting on behalf of the 105-inch, curved-screen TV from Samsung, when he lost his place on the teleprompter and couldn't find it again.

After stammering and shuffling for the world's longest minute, he walked off the stage, leaving the Samsung guy holding the bag.

An ignominious retreat for the whiz kid who learned at the knees of George Lucas and Steven Spielberg to become one of the richest Masters of Tinsel Town, worth more than $400 million, according to Celebrity Net Worth.

The other reason we should feel sorry for Michael Bay is that nobody else is. Going mute at the world's foremost consumer electronics show is bad enough, but the peanut gallery is howling with delight.

Someone said he only did what so many before him have wanted to do: walk out of a Michael Bay production. Someone else observed that it was the first time he seemed uncomfortable without a script.

Whoa. Tough crowd.

And that's going to make it tougher for the 75 per cent of us who fear public speaking more than death itself. Yes, that's true. Glossophobia, as the fear of public speaking is called, is the No. 1 phobia, beating out the fear of death, and No. 3, fear of spiders. Jerry Seinfeld once observed that at a funeral, most of us would rather be in the casket instead of giving the eulogy.

Even if it's just standing in front of the class to spell glossophobia, most of us would rather die. My first real bout with stage fright happened in Grade 8, when I was required to stand in front of a packed school gym and play Moon River on the trombone. Somehow I got through the whole thing even though the sheet music kept slipping off the stand. But I kept thinking: there are two people in the audience who actually want to hear this, and I'm only sure about one of them (my mother).

No word on whether Michael Bay's mother was in the audience at CES, but it's a good idea for the jackals to remember that he has one, and she must be suffering agonies for her boy. For the sake of his mother, get off his case.

And if that doesn't move you to sympathy, you can at least learn from this ghastly experience. The next time you have to stand in front of an audience, before you go on, remember what happened to Michael Bay.

If that doesn't cause you to break into a flop sweat, nothing will.

ZOOM

Poached in their safe haven

COURTESY TIM WATTERS/SEA SHEPHERD AUSTRALIA

Protected whales seen captured

Activists have released rare photographs of protected whales killed by a Japanese fleet inside an internationally recognized ocean sanctuary.

Anti-whaling campaign group Sea Shepherd captured aerial footage of three minke whales' bloodied carcasses lying on the deck of Japanese vessel Nisshin Maru. METRO

Japan has loophole in moratorium

The images, purportedly taken inside the Southern Ocean Whale Sanctuary in Antarctica's Ross Dependency, have drawn international criticism from activists and politicians. Commercially hunting whales is banned in the region, but Japanese fleets allegedly capture the animals under a "scientific research" loophole in the moratorium on whaling. METRO

The image released by Sea Shepherd shows a bloodied deck of the Japanese whaling vessel Nisshin Maru. CONTRIBUTED

Surveillance

- The chairman of Sea Shepherd Australia says there is no oversight from the federal government.
- Last month, Australia's environment minister said there would be a plane sent to monitor the operation. Prior to the election, he said there would be a ship.

Clickbait

IRENE KUAN
Metro Online

Tech giants at the 2014 Consumer's Electronics Show in Las Vegas showed off their latest innovations in high-tech appliances from wireless, app-based plant monitors to a robot vacuum. Here are some highlights of home gadgets meant to make your life easier. CONTRIBUTED

Parrot Flower Power wireless plant monitor:

Ever wonder if your plant is parched or when its light intensity or temperature isn't quite right? With the Parrot Flower device, you can monitor and analyze the growth conditions of your flowery friends via a Bluetooth-equipped sensor that sends information to your smartphone or tablet using an app.

Smart Hom-Bot vacuum system:

This high-tech vacuum system is meant to make your life more convenient with the ability to map out your home to ensure a more effective cleaning path. The duel lenses on the appliance can snap images of your home and can remember the positioning of objects to sense when an area is already clean. It can also help clean air in the home via a HEPA filter, according to LG.

Panasonic's nanoe wet dry hair dryer:

A hair dryer may not seem all that impressive next to the many high-tech devices and gadgets at CES, but what makes Panasonic's nanoe hair dryer stand out is that it has the ability to add moisture to hair while drying it. According to Panasonic, the dryer breaks blown ions down before infusing them with moisture so imagine drying your tresses without having to worry about drying them out.

Twitter

@metropicks asked: Team Canada announced its roster for Sochi Olympics. Who would you have liked to see make the cut?

@KurtPenner: I would have picked Marty St Louis! #heart #consistency #goals #speedy #jiltedlasttime

@BergysAWarrior: #Looch deserved to be on #TeamCanada who wouldn't want a guy that can change a game with either a huge hit or by scoring a highlight goal :(

@alexisannna: I'm so sad about #Seabs and #Crow not making team canada but on the bright side #Sharp, #Toews and #Keith made it. #Sochi2014 #TeamCanada

@kfox9611: #TeamCanada should've brought Joe Thornton.. Imagine he scored 4 goals in the Olympics... #JumboJoe

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Grammys

Daft Punk GETTY IMAGES FILE

Daft Punk to perform with Stevie Wonder

For a group that had one of the top albums of the past year, Daft Punk has been keeping a low profile — even lower than the duo's disguise-happy public persona would suggest.

Since releasing their hit Random Access Memories in May, the helmeted ones haven't even performed live in front of an audience.

But when you're nominated for five Grammys, that's kind of a command performance, especially when one of those nominations is for Album of the Year.

In the grand tradition of unlikely Grammy pairings that actually make a lot of musical sense, Daft Punk will be performing with Motown legend Stevie Wonder, the show's executive producer Ken Ehrlich told Rolling Stone.

Rolling Stone also reported that Pharrell Williams and Nile Rodgers will perform with Daft Punk, so you can expect a rendition of their mega-hit, Get Lucky. METRO

Pack A.D. to engage new fans with Do Not Engage

Shift in sound.
Garage-rock duo push for a bigger audience with latest album

Vancouver garage-rock duo the Pack A.D., from left, Maya Miller and Becky Black. CONTRIBUTED/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Vancouver garage-rock duo the Pack A.D. finally cleaved their way onto Canadian airwaves with 2011's Unpersons, a record that strayed far from the skeletal hard blues that marked their early work.

With Do Not Engage — out Jan. 28 — the band is pushing its newfound tunefulness even further, and the duo is blunt when asked to describe the shift in sound.

"Now our songs have things like choruses," said drummer Maya Miller during a recent chat in Toronto. "They never used to. Truthfully, they do have more melodies now."

Shedding their nascent primal-blues leanings almost completely, the Pack A.D. here channel the melodic fuzz of '90s post-grunge and lo-fi for a concise set of 11 songs that recall a range of influences including the Breeders, the Grifters and Superchunk.

There's still variety within that framework. "There's no real consistency but I kind of like that," singer Becky Black muses, but the common thread is a new accessibility.

And that pop craft arrived at a fortuitous time for the band, seemingly perched on the cusp of a breakthrough.

Since Unpersons came out, they became Juno Award nominees for breakthrough group (natch), signed with Nettwerk Records — such a sufficiently large label that Black marvels "there's a lot more people to remember" — and whisked their undomesticated live show across some larger stages, including a gig last month opening for the Arctic Monkeys.

Miller and Black acknowledge that a desire to capitalize on such opportunities did influence their songwriting.

"I think it obviously played a part in coming up with this album," Miller said.

"I also think people now can dance to our new album," she added. "I think it's been harder to dance to our music in the past. We used to have less opportunity for that. It was very odd music. It didn't really go anywhere. So maybe it's going somewhere."

If it sounds as though the pair is unhappy with their earliest work — 2008's Tintype and Funeral Mixtape — well, that's pretty accurate.

Those elemental recordings helped the duo gather a following, but they're not representative of where the group is at now.

"For me, I tried to think we didn't do those first two albums," Miller said. "Not in a really bad way, but it just feels like I don't even understand what we were doing then."

"I guess you have to look at it positively though," Black interjects. "The only reason the albums are better now is because they were bad in the beginning."

And that dissatisfaction pushed them to where they are now. THE CANADIAN PRESS

On the band's past albums

"There's nowhere to move with happiness. I think it's a terrible place to be. It's complacency. You do not grow from being happy."
Pack A.D. drummer Maya Miller

SCENE

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Tracy Letts

A man who deserves the hyphens

IN FOCUS
Richard Crouse
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Tracy Letts CONTRIBUTED

Hollywood is full of hyphenates, the kind of people who introduce themselves as a model-actor-writer-waiter-personal-trainer-dog-walker.

But there's one Tinsel Town citizen who has actually earned every word in his hyphenated title.

Tracy Letts is an actor-writer-producer-Pulitzer-Prize-winner who is going to have to get bigger business cards if he gets any more successful.

You may not recognize the name unless you pay attention to the end credits of Homeland — he plays Senator Andrew Lockhart — or if you know who won the 2013 Tony Award for best actor in a play for Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?

He's a multi-talent with a shelf of awards, some heavyweight acting credits and a new movie screenplay on his resumé.

His latest project, the script for August: Osage County, puts words into the mouths of some of the biggest stars in Hollywood. The film brings together the Weston sisters, Barbara (Julia Roberts), Karen (Juliette Lewis) and Ivy (Julianne Nicholson) with their pill-popping mommy dearest Violet (Meryl Streep).

As a writer, Letts says inspiration came from Tennessee Williams, William Faulkner and Jim Thompson, which might explain the dark vein that runs through his work.

How twisted are his plays? "Everybody in Tracy's stories gets naked or dead," says his mom, author Billie Letts.

Still, there is no denying that his screenplay for Killer Joe, the 2011 Matthew McConaughey thriller, is written with what Roger Ebert called, "merciless black humour." The story of a corrupt cop and a bad insurance claim earned critical praise even if the Women Film Critics Circle cited the film for its presentation of what they called "the worst female and male images" of the year.

Letts seems willing to take on any challenge to add to his hyphenated status. There's just one thing you can't ask him to do. "I don't act in the stuff that I write," he says. "I have no interest in doing that."

Nicholson gets her big break in August: Osage County

Playing Ivy.
Metro talks to the actress about her breakthrough role

MATT PRIGGE
Metro in New York City

From left, Julianne Nicholson, Meryl Streep and Margo Martindale in August: Osage County. CONTRIBUTED

Who:
Julianne Nicholson

Where you've seen her:
The films Kinsey, Flannel Pajamas and Brief Interviews With Hideous Men; the shows Law and Order: Criminal Intent, Boardwalk Empire and Masters of Sex.

Her big break:
Playing Ivy, the centre of the storm of grotesques in the new film adaptation of August: Osage County, Tracy Letts' Pulitzer-winning play, which also stars Meryl Streep, Julia Roberts, Chris Cooper and many, many more.

Was she intimidated doing a film on this scale?:
"Yes. The first hurdle was getting the job. I just didn't think about (the cast). Then I got the job and I felt great. I felt like I intrinsically knew who Ivy was. I was also doing a play at the time, a new Sam Sheppard (who has a role in the film) play, so I felt like I was in that world, in a way. But a week before, I started panicking. As soon as I arrived, though, everyone was really welcoming."

On doing a play on film:
"I didn't look at it as a play. I had seen the play and I had loved it. But enough time had passed that I didn't remember any specifics. It wasn't like I had to recreate anything. And it's an amazing piece that's perfectly written."

Doing a play on film by a TV director:
"John (Wells)' strength is with ensembles. He has a history of doing that with ER and Shameless and The Company Men. He has a real knack for bringing the right people together to get the best out of them."

Shooting the big set piece, a 19-page dinner scene, over four days:
"(Wells) broke it up into three sections, six or seven pages for each part. We rehearsed the whole thing through at Meryl's house. We all sat around the table and ate dinner while we rehearsed the lines and got the rhythm of it, discovered beats. When shooting it, it didn't feel choppy. It felt like everyone knew their lines. We probably could have done it straight through every time."

On it feeling like a play:
"Early on it felt like the beginning days of a play, when you're sitting around talking, before you put it on its feet. You're sharing stories and exploring ideas and asking questions. It was also just being together, getting to know each other, picking up each other's mannerisms, creating a feel of history so that when you start filming you already know each other, rather than showing up on the first day and acting like someone's your sister."

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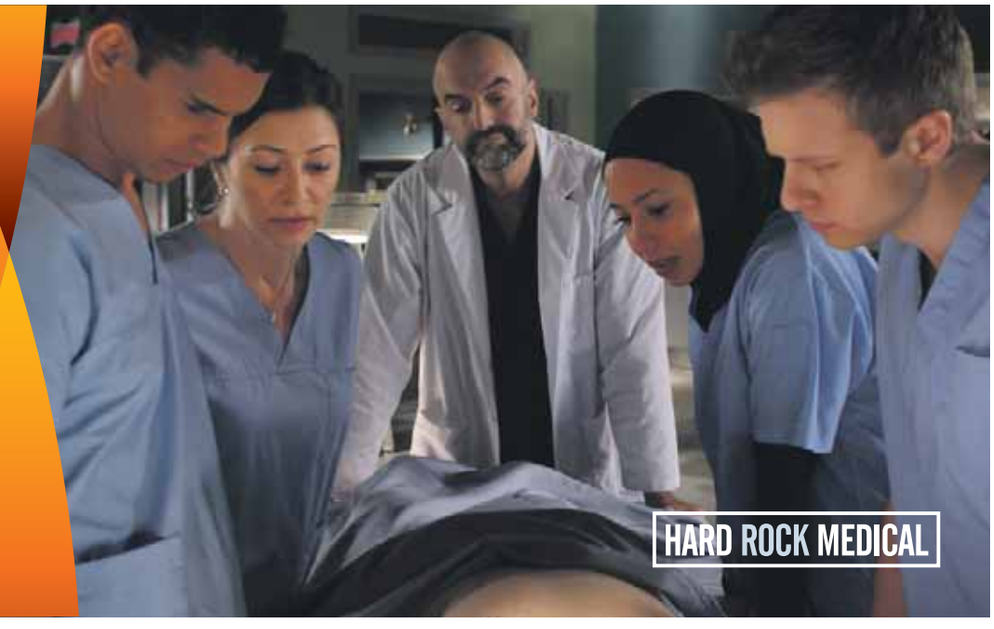


Getting to know TV stars

Metro caught up with a few of the actors who will be on your tube this winter.

Chicago PD

Sophia Bush of Chicago PD

Who's your dream buddy cop?
I have a pretty serious obsession with Woody Harrelson's work. And he's playing a cop on his new show. I'd love to trade thoughts with him!

Favourite all-time cop show or movie theme song?
The theme song to Dragnet. Hands down.

If I was a cop for a day I'd be most excited to ____
Flip the sirens on. A lot.

GLOBAL ON WEDNESDAY – 10PM ET/PT

Hawaii Five-0

Grace Park of Hawaii Five-0

Which TV cop duo or team would you most like to partner up with?
Poncho from CHiPs.

You're stranded on a deserted island – what's the one thing you would bring?
LOST DVD set.

Favourite Canadian travel destination? Favourite Canadian travel memory?
Whistler, Tofino and B.C. camping.

GLOBAL ON FRIDAY – 9PM ET/PT

NCIS: LA

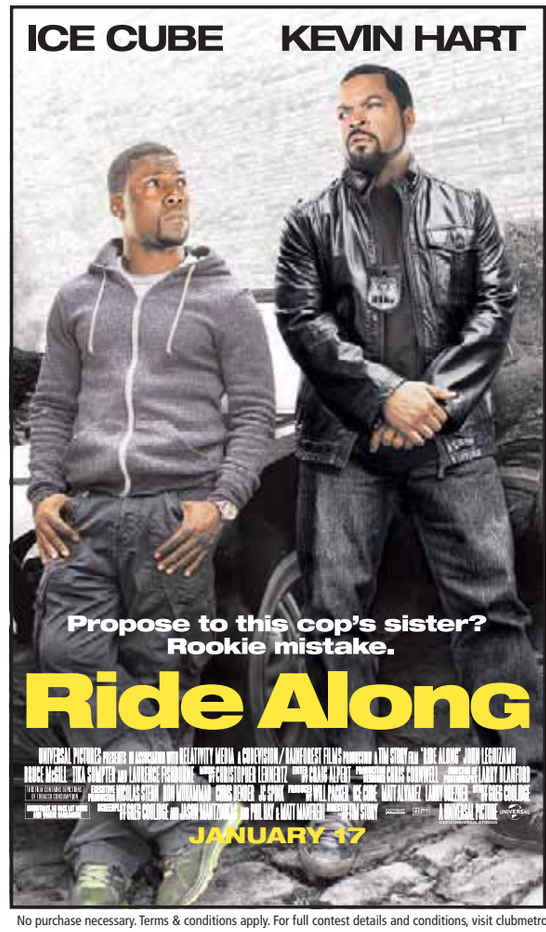
Eric Christian Olsen of NCIS: LA

Which TV cop duo would you most like to partner up with?
CHiPs. 'Cause four wheels move the body, two wheels move the soul.

Pick a personal theme song...
Going to California by Led Zeppelin

Favourite Canadian travel destination?
Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver.

GLOBAL JANUARY 14 – 9PM ET/PT



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THE OTHER SIDE

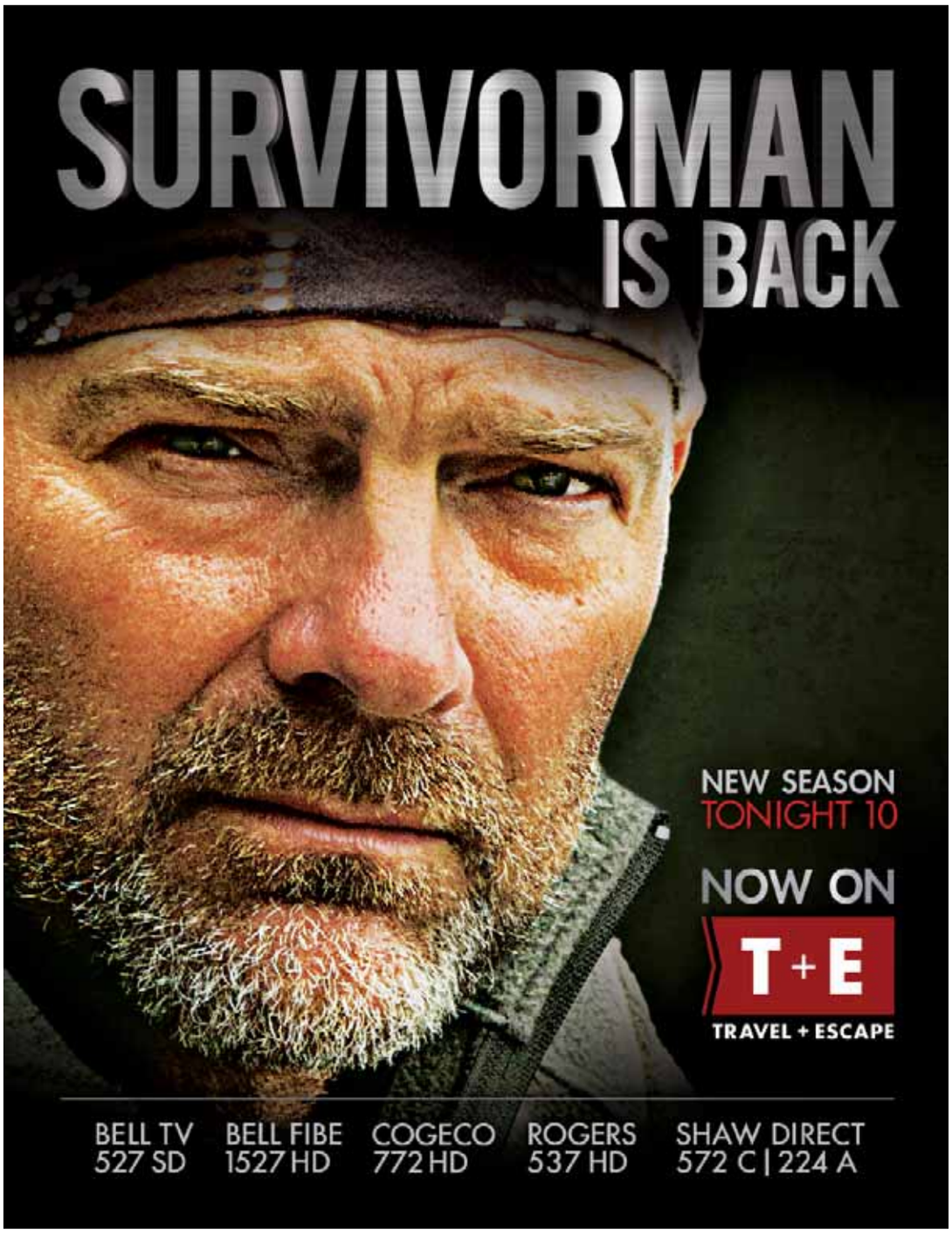
American Horror Story co-stars to wed — despite domestic abuse arrest

Evan Peters reportedly proposed to his American Horror Story co-star and girlfriend, Emma Roberts, over the holidays in New York before heading off to London for New Year's, according to People magazine.

The couple returned to the U.S. this week, with Roberts sporting a diamond on her ring finger.

Roberts, who has been dating Peters since 2012, was arrested on domestic violence charges last year after an incident that left Peters bloodied, though she was released a few hours later after he refused to press charges.

Evan Peters and Emma Roberts ALL PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES



METRO DISH

OUR TAKE ON THE WORLD OF CELEBRITIES

The Word

Twilight's Lutz on those Miley rumours

MEREDITH ENGEL
Metro World News

Ever since being spotted together at Beacher's Madhouse MGM around New Year's, The Legend of Hercules star Kellan Lutz has been linked with the world's most famous twerk monster, Miley Cyrus. But is there any truth to that rumour? We spoke to Lutz, who set the record straight.

"I adore the girl, and people assume stuff just because you're photographed at a party with multitudes of celebrities and public figures," he says.

"She's been a close friend of mine for years and we're friends. It's always great to hang out, especially with her being so busy and me being so busy.

"But the gossip and all these rumours that insiders say, they're funny because I don't look at these tabloids. ... I'm like, 'Where do people come up with this?' It's like people can just say 'insiders said' and then they can cover their butts that way. But no, she's an awesome girl and a really good friend."

So, folks, time to put away those fantasies of a tongue-wagging vampire baby.

Twitter

@samantharonson
Tried to be a human being and went to sleep before midnight, now I'm wide awake. Is this what you guys do? Now what?

@DanaDelany
lost 150 followers with Twitter update. Weird. Anyone else?

@SteveMartinToGo
I'd like to apologize for calling Polar Vortex winter. It's actually more of a spring.

Tulum's beach on the Riviera Maya in Mexico features not only beautiful sand but pure, aquamarine waters and the ruins of an ancient Mayan village. JIM BYERS/METRO

Tell the snow where to go

And say hello to sand. Thaw the winter chill with an overview of some great beaches

JIM BYERS
@jimbyerstravel
jimbyerstravel.com

What with ice storms and snow and cold snaps, we could all use a bit of sand and surf right about now. Here's a look at eight of my favourite beaches in North America and the Caribbean.

Trunk Bay, St. John, U.S. Virgin Islands

Perhaps the prettiest beach I've ever seen, with incredible water and even an underwater snorkelling trail you can follow. There's hardly a building in sight, the water is calm and there are great views of the British Virgin Islands.

Napili Beach, Maui, Hawaii

A perfect crescent of soft sand on a beach where no building can go more than two stories high. Safe for kids at the north end and decent bodysurfing at the south end, plus awesome views of nearby Molokai and killer sunsets.

Miami

Yeah, this is an obvious, easy one. But how can you resist the pretty people and great bars and the luscious Art Deco architecture? Try the SoHo Beach House for an artsy hotel stay or strut your stuff on Haulover Beach, one of the few legal nude beaches in the U.S.

Sugar Beach, St. Lucia

It's not big but it's flanked by glorious, jungle-clad, deep green outcroppings of rock called The Pitons. There's a great snorkelling reef that's a UNESCO heritage site.

Valley Church Beach on Antigua has lovely sand and smooth, clear waters.

Tulum, Mexico

If you get tired of checking out the pretty, young people cavorting in the aquamarine water, you can gaze at the lovely rock formations or soak in the view of Mayan ruins overlooking the sea.

Valley Church, Antigua

The soft, white sand goes on for a good long while and the beach is flanked by pretty green hills dotted with vacation homes. There's a nice beach bar called The Nest.

Capitola, Calif.

I once called this village the best California surf town The Beach Boys never sang about. There's a pier for viewing sea lions or surfers and several rows of colourful homes right on the sand.

Hanalei Beach, Kauai, Hawaii

A gorgeous, long stretch on the north coast. It can be rainy here but the views of the nearby mountains are glorious. The beach was featured in the movie The Descendants with George Clooney. I don't think you'll see him, but hope springs eternal, doesn't it?

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How to take that epic, round-the-world trip

Tired of doing the same thing day after day? Wish you could pack it in and spend 2014 exploring the far corners of the world? With a little bit of planning, taking a travel sabbatical is possible.

ON THE MOVE
Loren Christie
life@metronews.ca

Set the date

Put a concrete departure date on the calendar. Give yourself an extra psychological push by tying it to a life event like a milestone birthday or work anniversary. Discuss your plans with family, friends and colleagues. This will help make them feel real and you will get valuable input on your trip planning. Building support can help keep you from wimping out.

Work it out at work

It would be nice if every employer offered sabbatical programs, but the truth is they are few and far between. If no explicit policies exist try to negotiate an unpaid leave of absence. Have the conversation with the boss and explain how your year off will benefit the workplace upon your return. Give lots of notice and offer to train up your replacement. You may have to end up quitting, but make sure that you do it respectfully and leave with a good reference.

Don't break the bank

It's hard to save enough to cover a missing salary, but try. Cut your expenses as much as possible. Consider a side income while you are gone; rent your house or condo, sell your car or consider doing some part time or casual work while you are gone. Train yourself up to teach English abroad or make sure you are spending time in a country where you might be allowed to work part time in your own field. Also consider saving money by house, pet or baby-sitting while on the road.

Have kids? Bring 'em

Writer Heather Greenwood Davis recently took a year off with her family of four. According to @greenwooddavis, "My kids missed grades 2 and 4 when we traveled. We can't replace that and we didn't try to replicate it on the road. Instead what my kids got out of our year of travel was a different education. Parts of what they learned will affect their education in high school, in university and onwards. On top of that it has also affected their social abilities, their confidence and how they relate to the news they get on the playground."

Heather Greenwood Davis and family.
TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE FILE

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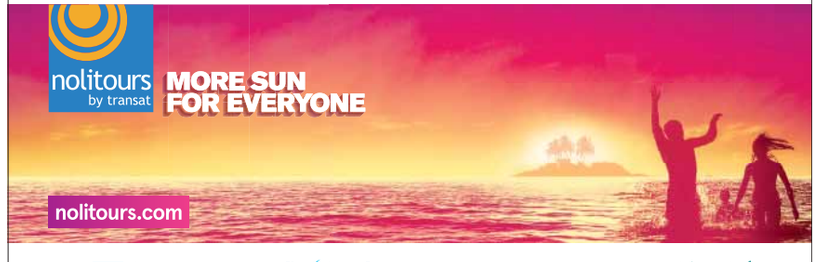

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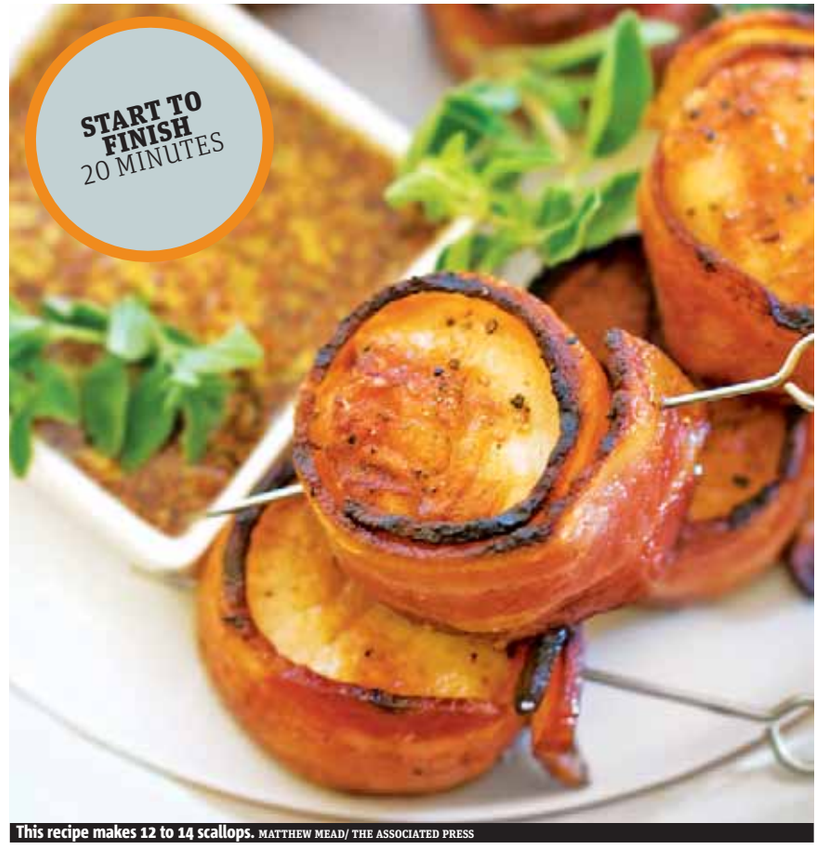
Luxury meets ease: Bacon-Wrapped Scallops



This recipe makes 12 to 14 scallops. MATTHEW MEAD/ THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Bacon-wrapped scallops are one of the most luxurious appetizers you can serve, not to mention one of the easiest to prepare.

Because there are only two main ingredients in this dish, you need to make sure you use the best quality — the biggest, freshest sea scallops you can find, and the most flavourful bacon. After that, they are so easy to grill that you hardly need a recipe.

There are two types of scallops, but only one of them is appropriate for the grill.

Tiny bay scallops are so sweet, you can eat them raw or just lightly sautéed. But they also are more expensive and not suited for grilling. What you want are the larger, less expensive sea scallops.

Ingredients

- 2 tbsp whole-grain mustard
- 2 tbsp maple syrup
- 1 lb jumbo sea scallops
- 1/2 lb centre-cut bacon
- Salt and ground black pepper
- Round wooden toothpicks, soaked in water for 30 minutes

1. Heat oven to 400 F. Set a wire rack over rimmed baking sheet. Heat grill to med-high.

2. In a small bowl, mix together the mustard and maple syrup. Set aside.

3. Use paper towels to blot dry the scallops. Arrange them on a plate, then set aside.

4. Arrange the bacon in a single layer on the rack over the baking sheet. Bake for 10 to 12 minutes, or until just starting to cook. Do not fully cook the bacon. Remove the bacon from the oven. If too hot to handle, let cool for several minutes. Once the bacon can be handled, wrap one slice of bacon around each scallop. Secure in place by threading one of the toothpicks through the bacon and scallop.

5. Use a pastry brush to lightly brush the tops and bottoms of the scallops with bacon fat from the pan. Season with salt and pepper. Grill for 2 to 3 minutes per side. Serve with the sauce for dolloping a bit onto each. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS/ ELIZABETH KARMEL, AUTHOR OF SOAKED, SLATHERED AND SEASONED.

Dress up your fish

This recipe serves four. MATTHEW MEAD/ THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

We all know that baked white fish is a fast and healthy way to get dinner on the table, particular during this annual time of dietary vow renewal.

What isn't always quite so clear is how to prepare that white fish without adding tons of fat and calories or rendering it a tasteless hunk of protein. But it's all about what you top it with.

This recipe uses a pineapple-mint salsa that gets tons of flavour from not only its namesake ingredients, but also cilantro, jalapeno, onion and garlic. The salsa is also great spooned over a baked sweet potato.

1. Heat the oven to 400 F. Line a rimmed baking sheet with foil, then coat it with cooking spray.

2. Arrange the haddock fillets on the baking sheet, then brush them with a bit of olive oil. Season with salt and pepper, then bake for 12 minutes, or until the fish flakes easily.

Ingredients

- 1 1/4 lbs haddock fillets
- Olive oil
- Kosher salt and ground black pepper
- 1 lb fresh pineapple flesh, cut into chunks
- 1 jalapeno pepper, seeded and chopped
- 1 medium red onion, quartered
- 1/4 cup fresh mint
- 1/4 cup fresh cilantro
- Juice of 1 lime
- Hot sauce, to taste

3. Meanwhile, in a food processor, combine the pineapple, jalapeno, onion, mint, cilantro and lime juice. Pulse until roughly chopped. Transfer to a bowl, then season with salt and pepper. Adjust heat by adding hot sauce, if desired. Serve the salsa over the haddock. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Reference check.
You can never have too many individuals singing your praise on the job hunt

MEGHAN GREAVES
Metro World News

During your studies and the early stages of your work life, you'll develop relationships with all sorts of different individuals and you never know how these relationships may help you down the road when starting your career search.

Your part-time employer, a mentor that you had while completing a campus or school project, a career counsellor, a professor or a peer with whom you worked on a big project are all examples of people who can become useful professional connections.

How to do it

Ask as you go
One of the easiest ways to build your references is to treat the connection process as an ongoing activity. This will help you avoid scrambling to remember all your important contacts when you need them.

Be sure to ask your potential references if they would be willing to give you a professional or personal reference letter, depending on the situation, once your work with them is complete.

If you aren't sure about the strength of your connection, stay in contact and work on building a relationship through email.

Don't be afraid to ask
Asking someone for a reference doesn't have to be a daunting task — you've likely already established a good relationship with them.

Also, it isn't mandatory to ask for a reference face-to-face. Though this is the most formal way to ask for a reference, if the idea truly puts you out of your comfort zone or you can't meet with the person, over the phone or via email works well too.

Can't stop, won't stop

One of the easiest ways to build your references is to treat the connection process as an ongoing activity.

Keep it brief
Asking for a reference shouldn't be a speech about your life and why you deserve a reference from the person. Explain why you'd like them to be a reference and ask if they're comfortable doing so.

You don't want to waste their time — let them guide the conversation.

Why it's important to start now

Gives you credibility
Having references (you should aim to have at least three when applying for a job) shows that you have been able to take on multiple tasks and successfully complete them. Volunteer experiences, work experiences, projects or participation in different societies are all good examples of tasks that require dedication and purpose.

Potential employers want to know that they're investing in someone who won't get up and leave at a moment's notice. Having references to back you up only makes you more credible.

Supports your resumé
Anyone can make claims on a resumé. While you can't have a reference for every single item on your resumé, having a variety of references for different skills — organizational skills, leadership skills, marketing skills — makes every part of your resumé more substantial.

If you have different contacts to pull from, then you also have the ability to tailor your references to each job application.

This can give you an edge and makes you more employable.

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It's not just about who you know, it's about the people you know who think you've got plenty to offer. ISTOCK

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Put away that festive decor and get your foot back out the door

Of resolutions and resumés. How to get your head into the job-hunt game now that the nutcracker's been returned to storage

LEAH RUEHLICKE
Metro World News

Presents have been opened, Santa has come and gone and all that remains from your holiday baking is that gingerbread house no one knows if they're actually supposed to eat or not.

The holidays are officially over, but there are some lingering holiday lessons you can use when it comes to your job search.

The new year is the perfect time for some classic out-with-the-old, in-with-the-new thinking, so reflect upon your seasonal cheer and use it to move forward in landing your dream job.

Embrace your inner snowflake

As the saying goes, no two snowflakes are alike — and the same should go for you.

Managers and recruiters interview hundreds of people a month. They've heard the typical rehearsed answers time and time again.

What they're looking for is something different: that something that makes you unique and sets you apart from everyone else with the same qualifications you have.

That's not to say don't prepare, but let your personality shine through when answering what your biggest strengths and weaknesses are.

Make like a Christmas cookie and be fresh

No guest wants to eat baking that's drowning in freezer burn or has been sitting on the counter for the past three weeks.

Put your best foot forward when hosting that potluck and fill your house with freshness.

Similarly, pull yourself together when handing out resumés or going on interviews.

No one's going to hire the tired-eyed youngster with dishevelled hair.

If you look put together, your job search will naturally follow.

Believe in Santa Claus

When you're handing out endless applications and hearing nothing in return, it's easy to get discouraged and make the job hunt seem impossible.

The existence of good ol' Saint Nick also seems a tad implausible — but there's something about him that makes you want to believe in him.

Foster that into your job search as well. Believe in the impossible and power through. Santa (and your bank account) will thank you.

Make friends with your comb

No one's going to hire the tired-eyed youngster with disheveled hair.

Keep it movin'

The holidays ending is always a sad time. Nothing pains the heart more than seeing those bows shoved back in the ribbon drawer and tree stuffed sadly in the attic for another whole year.

- **But it's over.** You enjoyed it, now move on. Don't let yourself sit longingly in front of the TV hopelessly waiting for Home Alone to come back on. Instead, pick up that laptop and finish that resumé. Research job openings. Get connected to various contacts who might know of potential employment opportunities.

Put your game face on and get your sensational self out there. ISTOCK

Isn't it time to throw in the towel, old-timer?

The 'lump of labour' theory. Will a surge of older workers take jobs from the young? Economists say the opposite is true

It's an assertion that has been accepted as fact by droves of the unemployed: Older people remaining on the job later in life are stealing jobs from young people.

One problem, many economists say: It isn't supported by a wisp of fact.

"We all cannot believe that we have been fighting this theory for more than 150 years," said April Yanyuan Wu, a research economist at the Center for Retirement Research at Boston College, who co-authored a paper last year on the subject.

The commonly accepted vision of a surge of workers looks like this: A young post-doctoral student dreams of a full-time teaching job at their university, but there are no openings. An 80-something professor who has remained on the job long past what's considered "normal" retirement is blamed.

The problem with that vision is that there are probably full-time teaching positions available elsewhere, or the person blocking the young grad student from the job is only 40 years old, economists say. Further, the veteran professor's decision to stay employed and productive may stir other job growth. He may bring research grants to his university allowing for other hiring, may take on assistants, and may be able to dine out and shop and fuel the economy more than if he weren't on the job.

None of that would have happened had he retired.

The theory Wu and other economists are fighting is known as "lump of labour," and it has maintained traction in the U.S., particularly in a climate of high unemployment. The theory dates to 1851 and says if a group enters the labour market — or in this case, remains in it beyond their normal retirement date — others will be unable to gain employment or will have their hours cut.

It's a line of thinking that has been used in the U.S. immigration debate, in Europe to validate early retirement programs and it relies on a simple premise: that there are a fixed number of jobs available. In fact, most economists dispute this. When women entered the workforce, there weren't fewer jobs for men. The economy simply expanded.

The same is true with older workers, they argue.

"There's no evidence to support that increased employment by older people is going to hurt younger people in any way," said Alicia Munnell, director of the Center for Retirement Research and the co-author with Wu of Are Aging Baby Boomers Squeezing Young Workers Out of Jobs?

"It's not going to reduce their wages, it's not going to reduce their hours, it's not going to do anything bad to them," Munnell said.

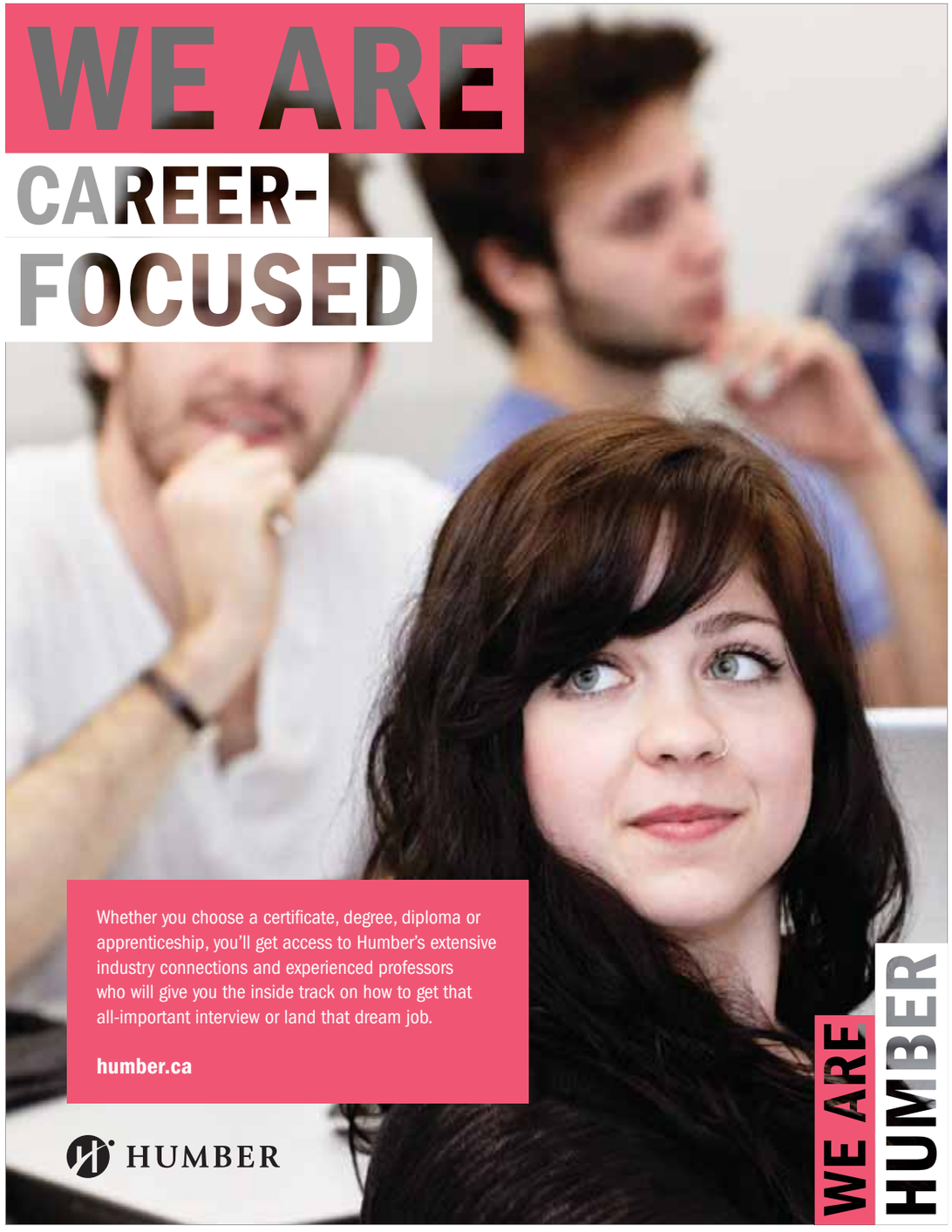
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Who's going to dominate the future workforce? ISTOCK

Some remain unconvinced

James Galbraith, a professor of government at the University of Texas at Austin, has advocated for a temporary lowering of the age to qualify for Social Security and Medicare to allow older workers who don't want to remain on the job a way to exit and to spur openings for younger workers.

- He doesn't buy the comparison of older workers to women entering the workforce and says others' arguments on older workers expanding the economy don't make sense when there are so many unemployed people. If there was a surplus of jobs, he said, there would be no problem with people working longer. But there isn't.
- "I can't imagine how you could refute that. The older worker retires, the employer looks around and hires another worker," he said. "It's like refuting elementary arithmetic."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All set up for Sochi

Olympic hockey. Kunitz, Marleau, Carter among questioned picks with likes of St. Louis, Giroux on outside looking in

GTA-raised stars P.K. Subban and Jonathan Tavares — seen here after winning gold at the world junior championship in Ottawa in 2009 — will team up again as members of Team Canada next month at the Sochi Olympics. RICHARD WOLOWICZ/GETTY IMAGES FILE

For more than four months, Team Canada's management staff anguished over these decisions.

Still, it took until 1 a.m. ET Tuesday — 10 hours before the team was to be unveiled — for executive director Steve Yzerman and his staff to come up with a final 25-man roster for the Sochi Olympics.

"We had gone out last night for dinner and came back. We were down to a couple of names and it was a real strong, healthy debate," St. Louis Blues general manager Doug Armstrong said. "At some point we had to stop at 25. When we got to that last name, we shook hands and said we're excited about this team."

With another gold medal the only measure of success, Yzerman, Armstrong and the rest of the management team read off names one by one, listing the group they hope will get the job done. Chris Kunitz, Patrick Marleau and Jeff Carter had their names called, while Claude Giroux, Logan Couture, Martin St. Louis and many others got phone calls from the staff delivering the bad news.

"The calls this morning to the guys that weren't making it, those are real difficult calls," Boston Bruins GM Peter Chiarelli said at Tuesday's news conference in Mississauga. "It kind of leaves an empty feeling in your stomach."

As difficult as those decisions and conversations were, they were necessary.

In the final analysis, Canada chose to put together a team of "different dimensions," in the words of Detroit Red Wings GM Ken Holland. Kunitz brings natural chemistry with Sidney Crosby, Marleau a mix of speed and scoring and Carter a nose for the net.

By the time the management team — made up of Yzerman, Holland, Chiarelli, Armstrong, Kevin Lowe, Hockey Canada executive Brad Pascall and coach Mike Babcock — got down to the final meeting, there was a general consensus on all three goaltenders, seven defencemen and 11 or 12 forwards.

Then it got down to brass tacks.

"The decisions, the late-night wrangling, it's like you go over things four, five, six, seven times," Chiarelli said. "Is this the right reason? Is this the right guy? What's the right reason? We talked about four or five guys at the end, and you have second thoughts, and you just got to be firm on what you believe and the fit."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Canada's 25-man roster

Goalies. Roberto Luongo, Carey Price, Mike Smith.

Defencemen. Jay Bouwmeester, Drew Doughty, Dan Hamhuis, Duncan Keith, Alex Pietrangelo, P.K. Subban, Marc-Edouard Vlasic, Shea Weber.

Forwards. Jamie Benn, Patrice Bergeron, Jeff Carter, Sidney Crosby, Matt Duchene, Ryan Getzlaf, Chris Kunitz, Patrick Marleau, Rick Nash, Corey Perry, Patrick Sharp, Steven Stamkos, John Tavares, Jonathan Toews.

Motivating factors

"They're the people who make me better. So I hope they keep critiquing and finding things to talk about." Team Canada's P.K Subban, whose critics remain even after leading all NHL defencemen with 38 points in 42 games last season.

Skiing

Decision to sit out Games leaves Vonn 'devastated'

Lindsey Vonn will miss the Sochi Olympics because of a right knee injury, leaving the Winter Games without one of its biggest stars.

The 29-year-old skier from Vail, Colo., announced her decision Tuesday, exactly one month before the opening ceremony in Russia. Her personal publicist, Lewis Kay, said in a statement Vonn will have surgery "shortly."

In a Facebook posting, Vonn said she is "devastated" to miss the Olympics, "but the reality has sunk in that my knee is just too unstable to compete at this level." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NBA

Cavs get better, Bulls save cash in Deng-Bynum swap

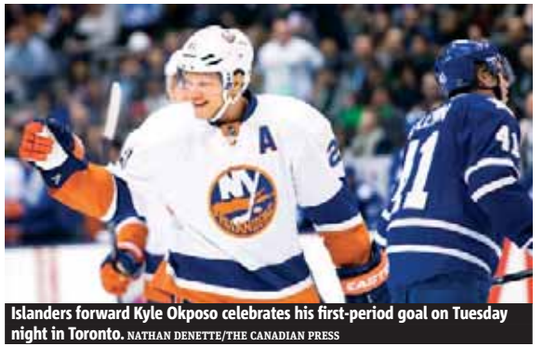
With their season quickly sliding toward yet another trip to the NBA lottery, the Cleveland Cavaliers had to do something to slow their freefall toward irrelevance.

The Cavs acquired Luol Deng, a two-time all-star small forward with Chicago, early Tuesday in a trade from the Bulls for Andrew Bynum.

As expected, the Bulls waived Bynum, who has chronically bad knees and has played just 24 games the past two seasons. Bynum was due another $6 million on the $24 million, two-year contract he signed with Cleveland in July, and the Bulls would have had to pay him if he was kept past Tuesday at 5 p.m.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Isles leave Leafs stranded without a win



Islanders forward Kyle Okposo celebrates his first-period goal on Tuesday night in Toronto. NATHAN DENETTE/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Frans Nielsen, Calvin De Haan and Cal Clutterbuck all scored third-period goals to lead the New York Islanders past the Toronto Maple leafs 5-3 on Tuesday night.

New York (16-22-7) kicked off a six-game road trip with their second win in as many nights after downing the Dallas Stars 7-3 on Monday.

It was another frustrating decision for Toronto (21-18-5), which outshot the Islanders 26-25 coming off a lopsided 7-1 home loss to the New York Rangers on Saturday night. That defeat snapped a three-game win streak.

Olympic Leaf

"I'm so happy to make the Olympic team and to play at home, too."

Leafs forward Nikolai Kulemin, who was named to Russia's Olympic team on Tuesday. Americans Phil Kessel and James van Riemsdyk are also Leaf Olympians.

The Leafs made it interesting when Nazem Kadri's shot deflected in off Joffrey Lupul at the 16:55 mark of the third period to cut New York's lead to 4-3. It was Lupul's 13th goal of the season, delighting the Air Canada Centre gathering of 19,164. But Clutterbuck cemented the win with an empty-net goal at 19:51.

Nielsen's power-play goal, his 16th of the season, broke a 2-2 tie at 3:41 with Lupul serving a goalie interference penalty.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Raptors off target against Pacers

NBA. Toronto shoots 37 per cent from the field in 86-79 loss to league-leading Pacers

Roy Hibbert scored 22 points and Danny Granger matched his season high with 13 to help Indiana hold off Toronto 86-79 Tuesday night.

The Pacers (28-6) won their third straight, retaining the NBA's best record by holding the Raptors to a season low in points.

Toronto (16-17) has lost two straight on the road — at Miami and Indiana — after winning four straight. The Raptors were led by DeMar DeRozan with 28 and Patrick Patterson with 20 against a Pacers team that looked more like itself after losing north of the border last week.

Indiana had a 40-26 scoring advantage in the paint and limited the Raptors to 37 per cent shooting from the field. And instead of struggling in the second half, the Pacers pulled away.

The Pacers' Danny Granger contests a shot of Raptors guard DeMar DeRozan in Indianapolis on Tuesday.
AJ MAST/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

They closed the first half on an 8-3 spurt to take a 44-36 lead they extended to 17 in the third. Toronto couldn't get closer than six the rest of the way.

Not all went smoothly for the Pacers.

All-Star Paul George got into early foul trouble and never really got going. And the Pacers' usually solid outside shooters were just 1-for-11 from three-point range. But Indiana turned the tables on Toronto with an old combination.

The Pacers had a 53-36 rebounding edge, and filled the gaps with a balanced offence. Lance Stephenson fell just short of his fourth triple double of the season, finishing with 13 points, 10 rebounds and eight assists. George and George Hill each added 11.

Kyle Lowry scored 16 for the Raptors.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NHL

EASTERN CONFERENCE

ATLANTIC DIVISION

	GP	W	L	OL	GF	GA	Pt
Boston	42	28	12	2	124	89	58
Montreal	44	25	14	5	114	103	55
Tampa Bay	42	25	13	4	119	100	54
Detroit	43	19	14	10	114	121	48
Toronto	44	21	18	5	122	132	47
Ottawa	44	19	18	7	126	141	45
Florida	43	16	21	6	102	136	38
Buffalo	42	12	26	4	74	118	28

METROPOLITAN DIVISION

	GP	W	L	OL	GF	GA	Pt
Pittsburgh	44	31	12	1	142	103	63
Philadelphia	43	22	17	4	114	118	48
Washington	42	20	16	6	128	128	46
Carolina	43	18	16	9	105	124	45
N.Y. Rangers	44	21	20	3	108	119	45
New Jersey	44	17	18	9	103	113	43
Columbus	43	19	20	4	117	126	42
N.Y. Islanders	45	16	22	7	124	149	39

WESTERN CONFERENCE

CENTRAL DIVISION

	GP	W	L	OL	GF	GA	Pt
Chicago	45	29	7	9	167	124	67
St. Louis	41	29	7	5	150	95	63
Colorado	42	26	12	4	123	108	56
Minnesota	44	22	17	5	106	113	49
Dallas	42	20	15	7	123	131	47
Winnipeg	45	19	21	5	123	135	43
Nashville	43	18	19	6	102	129	42

PACIFIC DIVISION

	GP	W	L	OL	GF	GA	Pt
Anaheim	44	31	8	5	146	111	67
San Jose	43	27	10	6	142	111	60
Los Angeles	43	26	13	4	113	89	56
Vancouver	44	23	13	8	117	108	54
Phoenix	41	20	12	9	123	127	49
Calgary	42	15	21	6	100	131	36
Edmonton	45	14	26	5	117	156	33

Note: Two points for a win, one point for an overtime or shootout loss.

Tuesday's results
N.Y. Islanders 5 Toronto 3
Philadelphia 3 New Jersey 2 (OT)
Carolina at Buffalo (ppd., storm)
Tampa Bay at Winnipeg
San Jose at Nashville
Calgary at Phoenix
St. Louis at Edmonton
Boston at Anaheim
Pittsburgh at Vancouver
Minnesota at Los Angeles
Monday's results
Calgary 4 Colorado 3
Columbus 4 N.Y. Rangers 3 (SO)
Montreal 2 Florida 1
N.Y. Islanders 7 Dallas 3
Wednesday's games — All Times Eastern
Montreal at Philadelphia, 7:30 p.m.
N.Y. Rangers at Chicago, 8 p.m.
Ottawa at Colorado, 9:30 p.m.
Thursday's games
Dallas at New Jersey, 7 p.m.
Toronto at Carolina, 7 p.m.
Florida at Buffalo, 7 p.m.
Washington at Tampa Bay, 7:30 p.m.
Anaheim at Nashville, 8 p.m.
St. Louis at Calgary, 9 p.m.
Minnesota at Phoenix, 9 p.m.
Boston at Los Angeles, 10:30 p.m.
Detroit at San Jose, 10:30 p.m.

SCORING LEADERS

	G	A	Pt
Crosby, Pgh	23	40	63
Kane, Chi	23	31	54
Tavares, NYI	20	31	51
Getzlaf, Ana	20	28	48
Thornton, SJ	5	43	48
Kunitz, Pgh	23	24	47
Sharp, Chi	25	21	46
Backstrom, Wash	10	36	46

Not including last night's games

NFL PLAYOFFS

WILD CARD WEEKEND

Sunday's results
AFC — San Diego 27 Cincinnati 10
NFC — San Francisco 23 Green Bay 20
Saturday's results
AFC — Indianapolis 45 Kansas City 44
NFC — New Orleans 26 Philadelphia 24

DIVISIONAL PLAYOFFS

Saturday's games — All Times Eastern
NFC — New Orleans at Seattle, 4:35 p.m.
AFC — Indianapolis at New England, 8:15 p.m.
Sunday's games
NFC — San Francisco at Carolina, 1:05 p.m.
AFC — San Diego at Denver, 4:40 p.m.

NBA

EASTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	Pct	GB
d-Indiana	28	6	.824	—
d-Miami	27	8	.771	1½
Atlanta	18	17	.514	10½
d-Toronto	16	17	.485	11½
Washington	15	17	.469	12
Chicago	14	18	.438	13
Charlotte	15	21	.417	14
Detroit	14	21	.400	14½
Brooklyn	13	21	.382	15
Boston	13	21	.382	15
New York	12	22	.353	16
Cleveland	12	23	.343	16½
Philadelphia	12	23	.343	16½
Orlando	10	24	.294	18
Milwaukee	7	27	.206	21

WESTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	Pct	GB
d-Oklahoma City	27	7	.794	—
d-San Antonio	26	8	.765	1
Portland	26	8	.765	1
d-Golden State	24	13	.649	4½
L.A. Clippers	24	13	.649	4½
Houston	22	13	.629	5½
Phoenix	20	12	.625	6
Dallas	19	15	.559	8
Minnesota	17	17	.500	10
Denver	16	17	.485	10½
New Orleans	15	18	.455	11½
Memphis	15	18	.455	11½
L.A. Lakers	14	20	.412	13
Sacramento	10	22	.313	16
Utah	11	25	.306	17

Tuesday's results
Cleveland 111 Philadelphia 93
Golden State 101 Milwaukee 80
Indiana 86 Toronto 79
Miami 107 New Orleans 88
New York 89 Detroit 85
Washington 97 Charlotte 83
Phoenix at Chicago
San Antonio at Memphis
L.A. Lakers at Dallas
Boston at Denver
Oklahoma City at Utah
Portland at Sacramento
Wednesday's games — All Times Eastern
Detroit at Toronto, 7 p.m.
Dallas at San Antonio, 7 p.m.
Golden State at Brooklyn, 7:30 p.m.
Indiana at Atlanta, 7:30 p.m.
Washington at New Orleans, 8 p.m.
L.A. Lakers at Houston, 8 p.m.
Phoenix at Minnesota, 9:30 p.m.
Orlando at Portland, 10 p.m.
Boston at L.A. Clippers, 10:30 p.m.

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Price for 2014 Dodge Journey R/T AWD shown: $32,390.§

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Retailer may sell for less. See your retailer for complete details. Example: 2013 Dodge Dart SE (25A) with a Purchase Price of $16,995, with a $0 down payment, financed at 0% for 36 months equals 78 bi-weekly payments of $217.88 with a cost of borrowing of $0 and a total obligation of $16,995. ∞NO PURCHASE NECESSARY. Contest begins November 27, 2013 at 9:00:00 a.m. ET and ends February 28, 2014 at 11:59:59 p.m. ET. Contest open to legal residents of Ontario who have reached the age of majority at the time of entry. One (1) entry per person. To enter, you must visit any participating Chrysler, Jeep, Dodge and Ram retailer during the contest period and purchase/finance/lease any new 2012, 2013 or 2014 Chrysler, Jeep, Dodge or Ram vehicle (excluding SRT Viper models). Four (4) grand prizes available to be won, each consisting of a pair of VIP tickets and trip to watch the 2014 Battle of Ontario in Ottawa on April 12, 2014. Tickets are for April 12 ONLY. 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Santa Fe takes on a snowstorm

Review. A 300-plus kilometre night-time trek in treacherous weather reveals the Hyundai model's winter prowess

JUSTIN PRITCHARD
drive@metronews.ca

PHOTO: TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

2014 Hyundai Santa Fe

- **Type.** Four-door, front-wheel-drive compact wagon
- **Engines (hp).** 2-litre four cylinder, turbocharged and direct injected (264)
- **Transmissions.** 6-speed automatic
- **Base price (incl. destination).** $26,599

Tires

All wheel drive, ABS brakes and electronic stability control DO NOT make traction. The only way to increase the physical grip between a vehicle and a slippery road is with proper tires. Electronic aids or not, riding all-season tires in conditions like these would result in poor directional stability.

Xenon lights

My only complaint: xenon lights are typically great in a snowstorm. The ones in the Santa Fe were adequate, not mind-blowing. In clear conditions, they're more than adequate. For some reason, the light output diminishes notably when there's even a small amount of snow or ice on the lenses — and there's no washer system.

Mother Nature was all crabby-pants during my recent December test of the latest Hyundai Santa Fe, so she dumped about two feet of snow all over my hometown, then made the mercury plummet like Miley Cyrus's artistic standards.

Temperatures landed somewhere around 30 below, which is (delightfully) too cold for road salt to work. Prior to this, there was snow. Lots of snow. The second big, "all-night-long" dumping of the season. It left over a foot on the ground.

Naturally, I did what I always do when there's an all-night-long dumping of snow up here in Sudbury, Ont. I grabbed some buddies, some large double-doubles, and drove repeatedly around every unplowed back road I could find.

A few nights after this, I travelled 300 kilometres down Highway 69 after dark. That distance was spread evenly between extreme cold over frozen hard-packed ice-stripes and then slightly warmer temperatures accompanied by zero-visibility, blowing snow, and deep powder. A few noteworthy points about the wintertime driving experience of the tested 2013 Santa Fe 2.0T Limited AWD came to light in the process.

Proper ESC Calibration

In many winter situations, wheelspin is a good thing– and most of the time, the ESC in the Santa Fe allows enough of it. Wheelspin allows snow to be flung from the treads for better contact with the ground beneath the tires — so when you give Santa Fe the boots coming out of a parking lot and onto a busy street, it lets the wheels spin a little faster than they can grip to ensure you get moving quickly. In real life, this is more favorable than overly aggressive ESC systems that numb the throttle at any sign of wheelspin, cross their arms, report your activities to the fun police, and leave you throttleless in front of traffic. Ultimately, you'll feel like you're calling the shots, not the vehicle — and that's a good thing.

Hill Start Assist

Stop on a hill, and Santa Fe freezes the pressure in the brake lines for a few seconds while your foot moves from the brakes to the gas. This prevents rollback, makes life easier for the transmission, and also makes it far more likely that you'll get moving again after being stopped on an icy incline. After all, nothing's more embarrassing than holding up traffic while you spin all four tires and slide backwards like a sucker. The tester wore Hankook Winter I-Cept Evo tires in its 19-inch OEM size. I found them a nicely balanced all-round winter performance tire. They're perhaps slightly more slippery during hard braking and acceleration than a Michelin X-Ice or Pirelli Sottozero, but they are remarkably stable in a straight line and while steering.

AWD Done Right

Santa Fe's AWD system is clever and well set up for driving in nasty winter weather. The AWD system uses inputs from numerous sensors to pre-engage 4-wheel power in many situations when accelerating from a stop. Even with extremely light throttle in deep snow, it'll often power all four wheels from a stand still — preemptively increasing traction instead of letting the front wheels slip before engaging the rear ones. Otherwise, when the system brings the rear wheels online for propulsion, they engage quickly–within about 2 or 3 revolutions of the front wheels, and get a good share of engine power. This AWD system isn't shy about calling the rear wheels into play, and when all four tires spin, power is split actively to maximize extraction of available traction. There's even a 'lock' setting to pre-set the system into a 50/50 power split, though I never needed to use it. No issues with needless tire spinning or harshness during shifting power between the front and rear. In virtually any situation, this setup feels like it knows what it's doing.

Finally

After arriving at my destination, there was approximately 147 pounds of salty brown filthy road-guck frozen to the underside of the Santa Fe's front doors. Thankfully, those front doors actually cover the structural rocker panel where this frozen mess typically accumulates on most rides. Open the door, and the mess goes with it, revealing a clean-as-a-whistle surface to step over and keeping your pants clean.

Limited time 2.9% semi-monthly lease offered through Toyota Financial Services on approved credit to qualified retail customers on all new 2014 Corolla models. First semi-monthly payment due at lease inception and next semi-monthly payment due approximately 15 days later and semi-monthly thereafter throughout the term. Toyota Financial Services will waive the final semi-monthly payment. Semi-monthly lease offers not open to employees of Toyota Canada, Toyota Financial Services or TMMC/TMMC Vehicle Purchase Plan. Some conditions apply. See www.toyota.ca or your Toyota dealer for complete details. Example (applies across Canada except Quebec): 2014 Corolla CE 6M with a vehicle price of $17,515 (including $1,520 freight/PDI) leased at 2.9% over 60 months with $1,495 down payment equals 120 semi-monthly payments of $89 with a cost of borrowing of $1,672.60 and a total obligation of $12,327.40. $0 security deposit and first semi-monthly payment due at lease inception. Price and total obligation exclude license, insurance, registration, fees and taxes. 100,000 km allowance for 60 months, with ability to purchase additional kilometres at $0.05/km at time of lease inception, and a charge of $0.07/km for excess kilometres. Dealer may lease for less.

Check transmission on used Sport Trac

Second gear.
2007-2010
Ford Explorer
Sports Trac

JUSTIN
PRITCHARD
drive@metronews.ca

With an eye for flexibility, capability and style, the Ford Explorer Sport Trac hit its second generation for 2007 and was carried on until 2010. The dressed-up four-door pickup was geared towards lifestyle-oriented shoppers, and included four-wheel drive variants. Look for chrome accents, step-boards, navigation, a sunroof, leather seating, reverse park assist, a power rear window, Ford Sync and plenty more. A top-line 'Adrenaline' model adds more visual flare with a unique grille treatment, unique headlamps, 20-inch wheels and more.

PHOTO: PROVIDED

Common issues

Transmission problems come up first and foremost when checking out reliability of this generation Sport Trac. Signs of trouble on your test-drive include slipping, hesitation or roughness from the gear shifts, especially when switching between reverse and drive. In most cases, the problems are computer-related, not mechanical in nature, and a Ford mechanic can help ensure that's the case. The six-speed transmission and V8 engine combination looks like the safest bet. The five-speed automatic and V6 engine combination isn't recommended, due to additional problems reported frequently in the owner's community. That's right fellas: the V8 is your best bet, here. Drive slowly while turning and listen for any unwelcomed popping, clicking or grinding sounds, which could indicate a problem with the rear differential or wheel bearings. Note that any sloppiness to the steering over bumps, possibly coupled with unwelcomed sounds, could indicate a problem with the front suspension too. Cycle through the four-wheel drive modes, ensuring all engage and disengage as outlined in the owner's manual.

What owners like

Sport Trac owners tend to rave about the available Pioneer stereo system, easy-to-clean interior, flexibility, space, traction, and a solid, tough and rugged feel. Performance with the V8 engine is also highly rated.

What owners dislike

Common gripes include difficulty accessing cargo due to Sport Trac's deep bed, some cheap interior trim, fuel mileage with the V8 engine, and cheap, flimsy door handles.

Engine

Shoppers could opt for a four-litre V6 with 210 horsepower, or a 4.6 litre, 292-horsepower V8. An automatic transmission was standard on all models and towing capacity was rated at 7,000 lbs.

The verdict

It's the capability, flexibility and utility of the Sport Trac that will likely work hardest to attract customers to used models. The Sport Trac with the V8 engine is likely the most reliable bet, but a mechanical check-over focusing on the transmission and rear differential should be considered mandatory ahead of your purchase.

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Automakers cosy up to electronics industry

Consumer Electronic Show. Car companies turn out in force to showcase such things as laser high-beam headlights and the solar panel roof

AUTO PILOT
Mike Goetz
drive@metronews.ca

Similar to a magnifying glass, the Ford C-MAX Solar Energi Concept's "concentrator" solar panel roof also has a patent- pending system that tracks the sun as it moves from east to west. COURTESY FORD

The low beam headlights on the Audi Sport Quattro are LED technology. The high beams are lasers. COURTESY AUDI

Billed as the world's largest technology trade show, the Consumer Electronic Show (CES) in Las Vegas is eagerly anticipated by the geeky gadget crowd, and pointedly ignored by folks at the other end of the spectrum, who think the world went to crap around 1980, when computers and microchips first arrived in force and started taking over our souls.

The automakers have become very interested of late in CES, and this year's show happening right now has a record nine automakers participating.

Their presence seems not so much as an opportunity to show off their new tech stuff — which they do all the time at auto shows — but more as a way to integrate themselves into the Silicon Valley culture and leverage the exciting technology coming forth from the consumer electronics industry.

Automakers increasingly need to be in that faster-moving milieu. Product cycles in the auto industry are five years or longer. The consumer electronic industry works a bit faster, yes?

And technology seems to be a more collaborative endeavour than it's ever been: witness the announcement at CES that Audi, GM, Google, Honda, Hyundai and NVIDA have joined together to form the Open Automotive Alliance (OAA) to bring the Android platform to cars.

"The worlds of consumer and automotive technologies have never been more closely aligned, and this alliance will only pave the way for faster innovation," said Ricky Hudi, head of electrics and electronics development at Audi AG.

Audi is displaying its Sport Quattro concept car at CES. The hybrid sports coupe is brimming with technology, but I'm focused on its laser high-beam headlights. Yes, lasers. Apparently, the high beams have a range of 500 metres — roughly twice the distance of regular high beams. Lasers are also very energy efficient. Their primary downsides are cost and an intolerance of heat. In the future those draw backs should be overcome, and experts predict they will peacefully coexist with LED lights, which still have a lot of love to give.

Hyundai announced its new Genesis sedan would be integrated with the amazing Google Glass. Drivers won't be able to use the futuristic glasses while driving, but integrated software will let drivers do all sorts of "pre-drive" functions with them, such as remote start, navigation and music settings.

Ford's major CES display is the Ford C-MAX Solar Energi Concept. Like all C-Max plug-in hybrids, this concept can be charged by its on-board charger running off the gasoline engine and by plugging it into the grid. The concept goes one step further, with a solar panel roof that provides the same electricity as a four-hour plug-in session, although it would need a full day's worth of daylight to make it happen.

Similar to a magnifying glass, the Concept's "concentrator" solar panel roof also has a patent-pending system that tracks the sun as it moves from east to west.

The concept is a collaborative project between Ford, SunPower Corp. and the Georgia Institute of Technology. The institute will begin to test the vehicle in real-world scenarios for its feasibility as a production car. Such a vehicle would be particularly awesome in places where the electrical grid sucks or just doesn't exist.

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Experts trying to give vehicles their voice

Automotive communication.

Researchers are figuring out the best way for your car to talk to you

JIL MCINTOSH
Drive@metronews.ca

Although it can't carry on a conversation, your car communicates with you. Depending on how it's equipped, this can be anything from a warning when your seat belt isn't fastened, to chimes and lights if there's a vehicle alongside when you're trying to change lanes.

But those warning signals aren't randomly selected: "It requires significant testing and development," says Birsen Donmez, an assistant professor of industrial engineering at the University of Toronto, who is working on a safety feedback program for Toyota.

"Not everyone might react the same way to the same type of feedback, and the issue is to understand how to personalize these systems, because humans are so variable."

While Donmez isn't designing the actual systems, she's researching how drivers react to the feedback they're getting, and what types are most effective for the maximum number of drivers.

The system must be effective enough to get the driver's attention, but can't be so distracting that it diverts all of the driver's focus, and he or she ends up hitting the object that initially triggered the warning.

Factors that go into feedback design include what sets off a warning, such as speeding or wandering out of the lane; when the warning goes off; if it's visual or makes a sound, or both; how long it's on, and what information it provides to the driver.

Researchers use a variety of methods for testing, including focus groups, questionnaires to assess the risks that drivers might take, and driving simulators. For some projects, the test subjects drive in real-world conditions.

In one analysis, Donmez worked with Transport Canada to monitor a group of drivers and their reaction to vehicle feedback when they were speeding or following too close to the vehicle in front.

Not only did this provide information on the feedback, but it also let the researchers determine which drivers reacted most strongly to it, which could allow engineers to design systems that deliver the greatest assistance.

With so many individual drivers though, the system has to be geared toward providing benefit for a maximum number of people. "We go for the average, rather than each individual driver, unless it poses a danger for some drivers," Donmez says.

"At the worst case, you don't see a benefit (for every driver), but you don't see a decline in performance. You don't want to endanger anyone with the system."

To note

- **Warnings aren't the only issue.** Researchers also look at incentives such as fuel economy gauges, to be sure they aren't too distracting.
- **With and without.** In addition to seeing how subjects react to feedback, researchers also look at how they drive when it's taken away afterwards, to see how effective it is.
- **Admissions.** Test subjects are more likely to admit they do something, such as texting while driving, if they think other people are okay with it, but are less likely to admit anti-social behaviours such as impaired driving.

What does your vehicle communicate to you and how do you respond to it? JIL MCINTOSH/METRO

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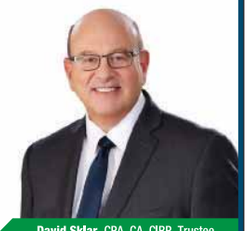
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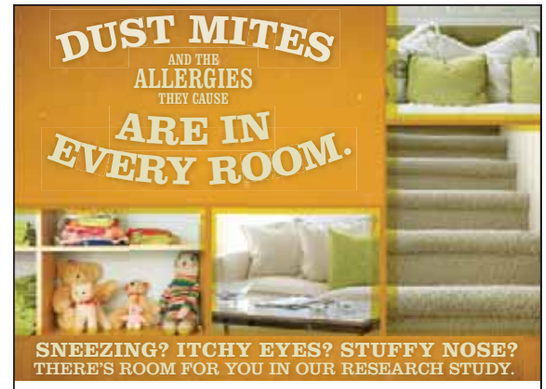

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Horoscopes

♈ Aries
March 21 - April 20
This is one of those days when you would rather be anywhere than where you are supposed to be. If you can find a legit way out of the situation then go for it. But if you fail to turn up, you could create a powerful enemy.

♉ Taurus
April 21 - May 21
Honest effort gets results, so keep plugging away at what you are working on and don't get dispirited if results are slow. Nothing you do is wasted and one day soon you will make that breakthrough you long for.

♊ Gemini
May 22 - June 21
It may appear as if someone is being deliberately obstructive, but you should ask yourself if there was something you said or did that could have turned them against you. If so, it's not too late to say sorry.

♋ Cancer
June 22 - July 23
Why are you pessimistic about your prospects? You may not have gotten everything you wanted recently but there is always tomorrow. You'll feel positive closer to the weekend.

♌ Leo
July 24 - Aug. 23
No matter how unsettling the changes that are taking place may be, keep telling yourself that in the long-term they will work in your favour. Your life story is unfolding as it should.

♍ Virgo
Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
Do something today that livens things up both at home and at work. Some may think you lost your senses but they are just the sort of people who have been dragging you down.

♎ Libra
Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
This is an important time for you and you will be making major changes to your lifestyle. The full moon on the 16th will clear away obstacles. Between now and then, plan big.

♏ Scorpio
Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
It seems you have made an error of judgment and all you can do is say sorry. If you sound sincere, others will forgive you and you can move on. But if your apology is grudging, bad feelings are likely to linger.

♐ Sagittarius
Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
Most times your hunches are spot on but the planets warn your instincts are not to be trusted today, so take care. This is one of those occasions when you must stick to facts.

♑ Capricorn
Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
Your relationship with authority may not be as good as it should be today, so watch what you say and be ready to back off if a conversation gets heated. You'll be the loser if it gets ugly.

♒ Aquarius
Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
You may think someone is keeping something from you, but don't let it worry you. It's unlikely to be bad news and it's even possible they are planning some kind of surprise.

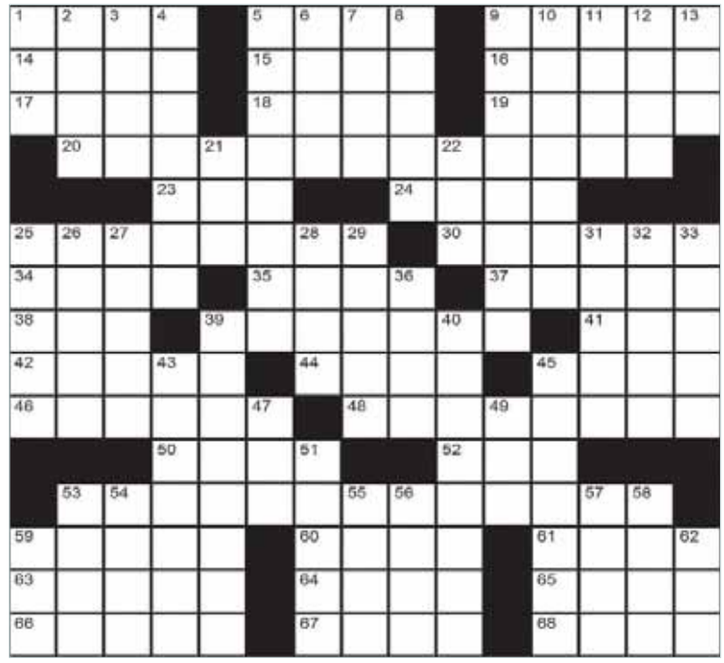
♓ Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
You must let a certain person know that you have no intention of allowing them to get rich at your expense. Today's Mars-Jupiter link will bring tensions to a head — say what's on your mind.

SALLY BROMPTON

Crossword: Canada Across and Down

See today's answers at metronews.ca/answers.

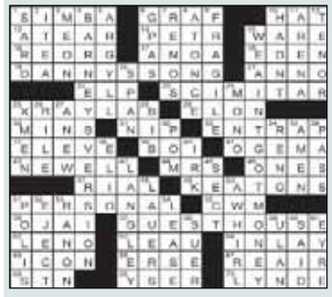
BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



Across
1. Country legend Johnny
5. Interlock
9. __ Canada (Pest control company)
14. Vicinity
15. __ sax
16. Husky
17. Canadian actor Raymond
18. T.Rex's style
19. Some ducks
20. The ancient Ichthyosaur, for one: 2 wds.
23. Bear: Spanish
24. Rug sort
25. Ski resort transports
30. The __ Works ('80s band)
34. Lennon's in-laws
35. "...see __ __ believe..."
37. Comedy's Mr. Anderson
38. Orchestra __
39. Old Montreal horse-drawn carriage
41. TV show taper
42. Mo of CBS' "Sunday Morning"
44. "I could __ _ horse!"
45. Gladiator's 1502
46. Waiting to be connected: 2 wds.
48. Alberta community near the Saskatchewan border
50. Mister Ed's hair
52. Slangy put down
53. "Moonstruck" (1987) Canadian director: 2 wds.
59. Hawaiian island
60. Makeover show, "__ on a Dime"
61. Type of mineral
63. "It's _ __ from God!"
64. Ended
65. __ In Canada
66. Quebec 'cup'
67. Jewel's "You __ Meant for Me"
68. Bread spread

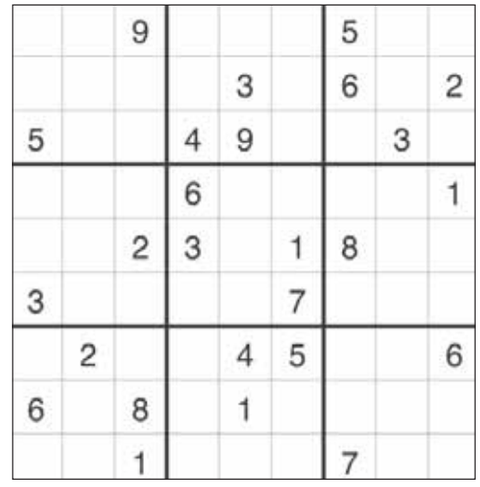
Down
1. Fare vehicle
2. Lily kind
3. Evening, in Italy
4. England: London department store
5. Julia in her 1989 'Steel' movie
6. Fashion magazine
7. Celestial body
8. Abodes
9. Barrier
10. Member of Canadian quartet The Tenors, Mr. Pereira
11. Ship part
12. "The Safety Dance" bit: "...can dance __ __ want to..."
13. Albany is its cap.
21. Prefix to 'thermal'
22. Fraternity letter
25. Give up amateur status: 2 wds.
26. Blooming __ (Starter menu item)
27. Top-__ (The best)
28. The Jetty __ __ Havre (Claude Monet painting)
29. Choo-choo-ing stuff
31. Blue Rodeo singer Jim
32. Bon Jovi's "__' on a Prayer"
33. "__, Indiana" (Early-'90s TV series)
36. Prefix to 'gon' (Eight-sided shape)
39. Medicine Cabinet: __ lotion
40. Canadian store HH = Home __
43. Canadian fashion label since 1983
45. "Cityline" 3 Chefs member, Mr. Capra
47. Scientific ID
49. Nintendo game console
51. Fund
53. Rocket org.
54. Nons opposites
55. Bee Gees' "__ Talkin'"
56. Rarely, hardly __
57. __ agreement
58. Connecting point
59. Nightspot in Broadway musical Cabaret, Kit __ Klub
62. New

Yesterday's Crossword



Sudoku

How to play
Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved.



Yesterday's Sudoku

2	5	8	6	1	3	7	4	9
9	1	6	4	8	7	3	2	5
7	3	4	9	2	5	1	6	8
8	6	5	2	3	9	4	7	1
4	9	3	5	7	1	6	8	2
1	2	7	8	6	4	9	5	3
5	4	1	7	9	8	2	3	6
6	7	9	3	5	2	8	1	4
3	8	2	1	4	6	5	9	7

Today
-11°/-16°
Partly cloudy

Thursday
-7°/-8°
Sunny

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Automobile Journalists Association of Canada

Sorento EX shown△

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hwy / city 100km^ 7.1L/10.4L

WAS ~~$159~~

THROWBACK PRICING

$124≠ BI-WEEKLY for the first **15 MONTHS.**

0%≠ financing

Includes Variable Throwback Pricing Incentive. $124 bi-weekly payments include $1,120 Throwback Pricing incentive. Payments are based on 2014 Sorento 2.4 LX AT FWD (SR75BE). 60-month financing amortized over 84 months. After 15 months, bi-weekly payments increase to $159. Principal balance of $8,255 due after 60 months. Throwback Pricing incentive may be taken as a lump sum or to reduce financed amount.≠

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Rondo EX Luxury shown△

THE ALL-NEW 2014 RONDO

hwy / city 100km^ 6.2L/9.4L

WAS ~~$127~~

THROWBACK PRICING

$87≠ BI-WEEKLY for the first **15 MONTHS.**

0%≠ financing

Includes Variable Throwback Pricing Incentive. $87 bi-weekly payments include $1,280 Throwback Pricing incentive. Payments are based on 2014 Rondo LX MT (RN551E). After 15 months, bi-weekly payments increase to $127. Throwback Pricing incentive may be taken as a lump sum or to reduce financed amount.≠

Sportage SX shown△

2013 SPORTAGE

hwy / city 100km^ 6.5L/9.7L

WAS ~~$132~~

THROWBACK PRICING

$107≠ BI-WEEKLY for the first **15 MONTHS.**

0%≠ financing

Includes Variable Throwback Pricing Incentive. $107 bi-weekly payments include $800 Throwback Pricing incentive. Payments are based on 2013 Sportage LX MT FWD (SP551D). 60-month financing amortized over 84 months. After 15 months, bi-weekly payments increase to $132. Principal balance of $6,851 due after 60 months. Throwback Pricing incentive may be taken as a lump sum or to reduce financed amount.≠

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Offer(s) available on select new 2013/2014 models through participating dealers to qualified retail customers who take delivery by January 31, 2014. Dealers may sell or lease for less. Some conditions apply. See dealer for complete details. Vehicles shown may include optional accessories and upgrades available at extra cost. All offers are subject to change without notice. All pricing includes delivery and destination fees up to $1,665, $34 tire recycling/filter charges, $5 OMVIC fee, environmental fee, variable dealer administration fees (up to $399) and $100 A/C charge (where applicable) and excludes licensing, registration, insurance, other taxes and down payment (if applicable and unless otherwise specified). Other lease and financing options also available. ≠Throwback Pricing available O.A.C. on financing offers on new 2013/2014 models. 0% financing for 84 months example: 2014 Rondo LX MT (RN551E) with a purchase price of $23,893 (including $1,665 freight/PDI and $399 administration fee) financed at 0% for 84-month period equals 32 reduced bi-weekly payments of $87 followed by 150 bi-weekly payments of $127. Cost of borrowing is $0 and total obligation is $23,893. Throwback Pricing incentive varies by model and trim level and may be taken as a lump sum or to reduce the financed amount. The Throwback Pricing incentive for the 2014 Rondo LX MT (RN551E) shown is $1,280 (a $40 reduction in 32 bi-weekly payments). Limited time offer. See retailer for complete details. Throwback Pricing is a trademark of Kia Canada Inc. 60/84 Amortization Financing Example: 2013 Sportage LX MT (SP551D)/2014 Sorento 2.4L LX AT FWD (SR75BE) with a purchase price of $24,178/$28,893 (including $1,650/$1,665 freight/PDI and $399 administration fee) financed at 0% for 60 months amortized over an 84-month period equals 32 reduced bi-weekly payments of $107/$124 followed by 98 bi-weekly payments of $132/$159 with a principal balance of $6,851/$8,255 plus applicable taxes due after 60 months. Cost of borrowing is $0 and total obligation is $24,178/$28,893. Throwback Pricing incentive varies by model and trim level and may be taken as a lump sum or to reduce the financed amount. The Throwback Pricing incentive for the 2013 Sportage LX MT (SP551D)/2014 Sorento 2.4L LX AT FWD (SR75BE) shown is $800/$1,120 (a $25/$35 reduction in 32 bi-weekly payments). Limited time offer. See retailer for complete details. 0% purchase financing is available on select new 2013/2014 Kia models O.A.C. Terms vary by model and trim, see dealer for complete details. △Model shown Manufacturer Suggested Retail Price for 2014 Sorento 3.3L EX AT AWD (SR75HE)/ 2013 Sportage 2.0T SX Navigation (SP759D)/2014 Rondo EX Luxury (RN756E) is $34,195/$39,145/$32,195. ^ Highway/city fuel consumption is based on the 2014 Sorento LX 2.4L GDI 4-cyl (A/T)/2013 Sportage 2.4L MPI 4-cyl (A/T)/2014 Rondo 2.0L GDI 4-cyl (M/T). These updated estimates are based on the Government of Canada's approved criteria and testing methods. Refer to the *EnerGuide Fuel Consumption Guide*. Your actual fuel consumption will vary based on driving habits and other factors. Information in this advertisement is believed to be accurate at the time of printing. For more information on our 5-year warranty coverage, visit kia.ca or call us at 1-877-542-2886. Kia is a trademark of Kia Motors Corporation.